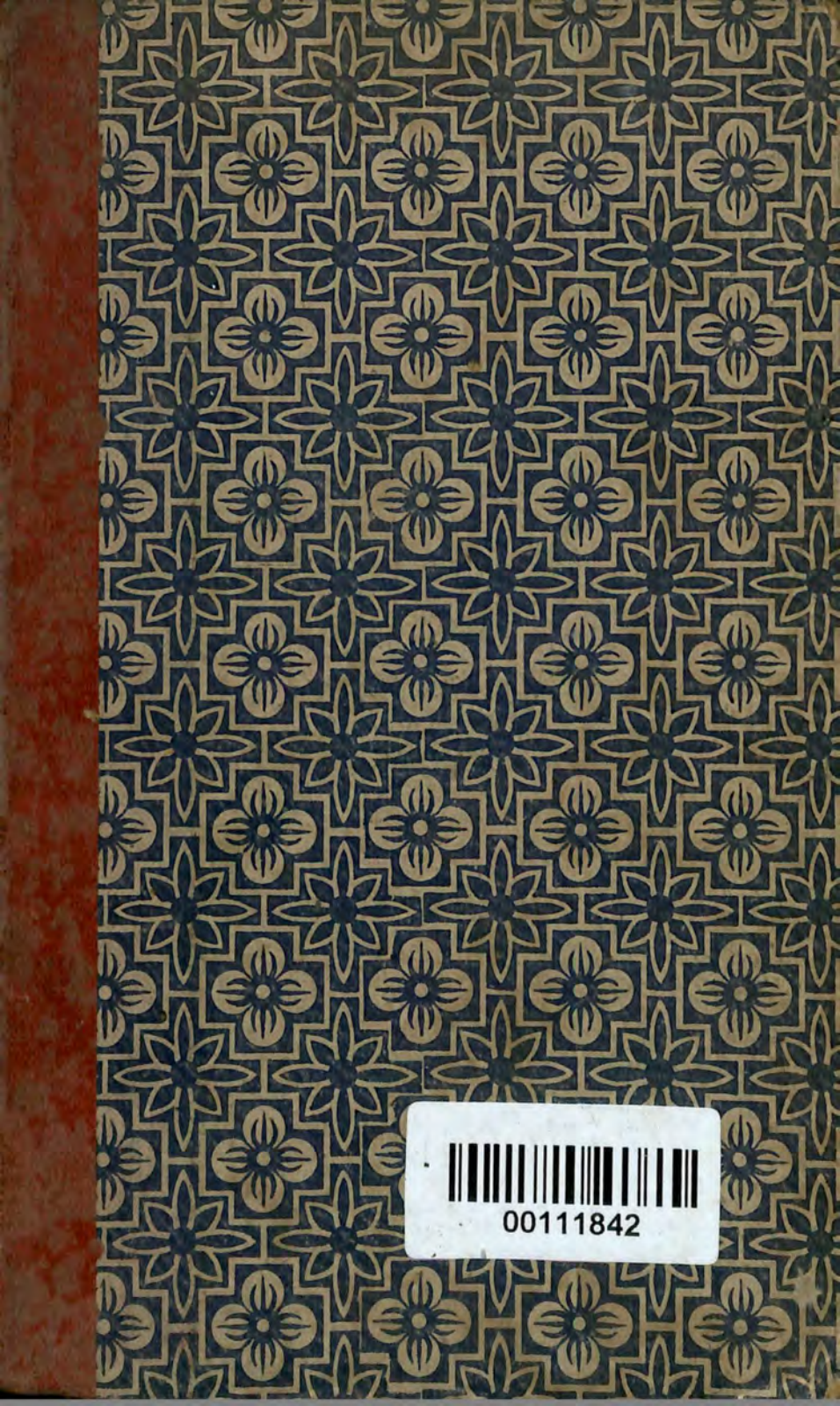
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THE

WORDS OF THE LORD JESUS.

RUDOLF STIER,

DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY, CHIEF PASTOR, AND SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHKEUDITZ.

VOLUME SECOND.

111842 as

TRANSLATED FROM THE SECOND REVISED AND ENLARGED GERMAN EDITION,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM B. POPE,
LONDON,

AND

REV. JOHN FULTON,
GARVALD.

EDINBURGH:
T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.; SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.; WARD AND CO.; JACKSON AND WALFORD, ETC. DUBLIN: JOHN ROBERTSON, AND HODGES AND SMITH.

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POSTSCRIPT.

Mr Pope has translated from Page 1 to 124; and Mr Fulton from Page 125 to end of Volume.

PRINTED BY ROBERT PARK, DUNDEE.

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THE GOSPEL OF ST MATTHEW.

THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE.

(Matt. x. 5—42; Mar. vi. 8—11; Lu. ix. 3—5.)

This longer discourse is indicated to us by St Matthew in the most literal and decisive manner as spoken in its integrity on one distinctive occasion (let ch. x. 1, 5, be read in connexion with ch. xi. 1). All, therefore, that has already been said in connexion with the Sermon on the Mount, may also be used here in refutation of that strange and wilful opinion which imputes to the Evangelist an elaboration into one discourse of many sayings uttered at many various times. This opinion is grounded strangely enough upon opposite reasons: sometimes upon the lack of connexion in the whole, and sometimes, on the contrary, on its far-reaching comprehensiveness, which too perfectly embraces all futurity to be consistent with the occasion of its utterance. This latter acknowledgment and supposition is, assuredly, the only true one: but the conclusion drawn from it is on that account all the more false. He who is capable of discerning in this chapter a collection of loosely-bound and inharmonious fragments, has not yet understood it aright, as our exposition, it is hoped, will show. But he who shall be capable of feeling and marking the deep-founded unity of the discourse, which proceeds in its organic structure from the immediate present to the most distant futurity, from the concrete contemplation of relations near at hand to the widest view of all relations, must also and necessarily be driven to the conclusion that only the Lord Himself could have constructed and given us such a whole.

Would it not have been far more unnatural and wonderful, that an humble and reverent minister of Christ's word, in his record of that word should have formed such a profoundly systematic discourse out of scattered utterances, than that the Lord Himself in the wisdom of His Spirit should have spoken it? Yea, we boldly affirm, resting upon the continually recurring analogies of our Lord's, whether lesser or longer discourses, that on this mission of the twelve He *would* not and *could* not have spoken otherwise than we read in St Matthew. It was impossible but that he should, at the critical and significant commencing points in His history, look forward to the futurity which would grow out of them: He could not fail to mark and to seize in all things which transpired within the sphere of His earthly life, the germs and prophetical types which were wrapped up within them. This we have distinctly seen in what we called especially and distinctively His "First Words." Now such a First Word we have here. He is sending His Apostles for the first time, and how could He otherwise than behold in them His future ambassadors to the world? The most cautious view of this restricted, preliminary proof-mission through the cities of Israel (as the Lord Himself declares it), cannot but attribute to Him the contemplation of the future and more distinctive career of these same Apostles, involving far more solemn and grander interests, the form and procedure of His kingdom to the end, the position and work of all His ambassadors and followers in general. Nothing could in effect be more natural than this. Let it not be said, that though these might have been the secret thoughts of our Lord in connexion with this mission, it would have answered no end to utter them beyond the necessity of the occasion, and the ability of His hearers to understand. This would be to misunderstand utterly the essential nature of all our Lord's discourse, which always and throughout, even where it does not so plainly declare itself as here, must have a *prophetical* character. Whatever He spoke from time to time, He spoke for futurity even to its final end, yea, even to eternity itself. This will become manifest when once all the unwritten sayings of the Word made flesh (not one of which could fall to the ground, be utterly forgotten or lost) shall be disclosed and recovered, in their influence for mercy or for judgment: and to the believing apprehension it

is already manifest in those words which declare themselves to have been spoken with reference to that future time when the Spirit in forming the Scripture, should bring them to the Apostles' remembrance in order to illustrate them to their minds.

Thus the Lord is here speaking to His Apostles great words, far-reaching in their meaning; and He speaks them *prophetically*, just as His Spirit had formerly spoken in the Prophets. The progress of His internal contemplation assumes here as everywhere the form of a *perspective* view. The present and the immediate are to Him the type of the more remote. In sending forth these, He contemplates all later missions of these Apostles and their successors. The words which He now speaks to the Twelve in such a manner that their literal meaning can only apply to their present object, contain, in their spiritual meaning, truths applicable to their whole future Apostolical course. But from this typical starting-point the thoughts and their expression rise more loftily and more freely into words, which they scarcely understand at the time, much less use and follow out, but which must at least have awakened within them the consciousness of extended developments to spring from them, and which are given to them now in order that the Spirit in His time may recall and interpret them to their minds.

The discourse evidently falls into *three* main masses, the limits of each of which are marked out by a concluding sentence, and a commencement anew new taken. The Lord first speaks literally and especially concerning this first mission and preaching, which may be almost regarded as similar to the commission and standing-point of *John the Baptist* (ver. 7)—save that John performed no miracles, did not travel up and down, could not already preach the peace of the opened kingdom of heaven to the poor. This section, which pursues its way through simple directions having no reference beyond the present occasion, finds its most solemn conclusion in ver. 15, where finished unbelief rejecting their words, is pointed to the final *judgment*. In ver. 16, a new section begins, with an almost abrupt declaration, which would unexpectedly reply to the question which the Apostles might ask themselves—does this then close all? *Behold, I send you!* that is, reduced to plainer words, and expounded;—I shall send you once again, and amid conditions of much greater seve-

rity: even full into the midst of contradiction and persecution. The expression, "send," corresponding to their name of *Apostles*, now first occurs in His discourse, and it indicates that now first their full office is referred to, that great mission for which the present one is but a typical and preparatory trial. This section consequently embraces the *Apostolical* period: the view extends to *men* generally, and the transition in their preaching from rejecting Israel to the Gentiles is plainly indicated (vers. 17, 18). Now, first comes forward the promise of the Spirit, and with intimation of persecutions (as in Jno. xv. 26; xvi. 4); in ver. 22, the meaning is strictly the same as afterwards, in Matt. xxiv. 9—13; and ver. 23 *concludes* with a catastrophe to precede the judgment, which, according to this connexion, can be only the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet not exclusively so, but this "coming of the Son of Man," as it is a type of a future and proper advent, so was also itself typified in His coming, in immediately following whither His disciples were sent before. The prophetically-perspective contemplation beholds the progress of events as they actually are in themselves, in all their internal significance and entireness: in the periods which are formed by great epochs of development, the earlier covers and fore-shadows the later, not, however, that the Spirit arbitrarily makes it a type, but because it already includes the latter in itself as a germ. Consequently as the instructions (vers. 5—15), in the *prophetical* sense of their literal meaning have an application to the more distinctive apostolical career; so does the apostolical instruction (vers. 16—23,) find its application to all the followers of the Apostles, to all to whom the Lord may ever say, I send you; being thus the immediately authentic *Missionary-Instruction* for all ages, disclosing its deeper meaning as centuries, and their varied experience, roll on.

This now comes forward into significant prominence in the third part of the discourse, the part which is developed with most completeness. The Lord's glance passes from the Apostles to the *disciples* generally, who were to be the salt and the light of the world, ambassadors and witnesses to men of the kingdom of God, as in the Sermon on the Mount. As this section began, generally, in the third person ("the disciple," ver. 24), so it only returns once to the style of address to the Apostles (vers. 26—31)

then proceeding to the end with declarations quite general (with the exception of vers. 34 and 40, where, however, the Apostles as such are not referred to alone) :—*whosoever* shall confess me, —*he that* loveth father or mother—*he that* findeth, &c. Here the persecuted condition which had been predicated of the apostolical period, is predicted as the permanent condition of His Church until the distribution of final rewards which is seen in the far perspective. The continuous process and final issue of Christ's great interest is predicted as *through warfare to victory;* His kingdom is fore-announced as to all His subjects a *Kingdom of the Cross* before the immeasurable rewards of glory are revealed. Such is the true disposition of this discourse, exhibiting its compact harmony, and progression of meaning: and it so entirely asserts its own unity, that even *Olshausen* in his exposition of this conglomeration of fragments in St Matthew, as he thinks it, involuntarily forgets his own opinion, and writes, as for example on vers. 38—41, as if the Lord himself were speaking, and as if the "Redeemer himself were closing" a discourse with his own impressive conclusion.

If we look at the arrangement a little more in detail, we find that the first part (vers. 5—15) falls into a threefold subdivision: —the *commission*, or sending, in the first, most distinctive sense; then, the *equipment* for it; then *directions for their conduct* in the execution of their commission. The sending—first of all, naturally, *whither?* vers. 5, 6, (with which, to indicate its preliminary character, we have at first, whither *not*). Then *for what purpose?* ver. 7, 8. (To preach the Gospel, in the power of miracles, and both perfectly free). The equipment (vers. 9, 10,) is likewise negative, partly in contrast with future times, partly as typical of them. Finally, the directions for their conduct (vers. 11—15), rise in their confirmatory conclusion to a far-reaching *anticipation* of the *issue* of the judgment, which thus forms a transition to the next starting-point.

Vers. 5, 6. This limitation to Israel is not announced by St Luke (ch. x.) as prescribed to the Seventy; but it is to be understood in their case, and ver. 1, intimates it plainly enough.[1]

[1] So that *Olshausen's* observation, that St Luke, as writing for Gentiles, would suppress that circumstance, is manifestly incorrect.

Only whither he himself would come, could the Lord send messengers: apart from every other consideration, this only would have been befitting. For could the Messiah and the Saviour satisfy any man with His mere representatives? Could the true Shepherd hand over a lost sheep to mere servants? Thus it is only His coming after (and in spirit going with them) that gives to these missionaries the authority and ground of their commission. What the Lord now says is in its due time solemnly retracted Matt. xxviii. 19; Lu. xxiv. 47; Acts i. 8: while, for the Apostle to the Gentiles, the commission is simply reversed: *not* to Jerusalem, but to the Gentiles! Acts ix. 15; xxii. 18; xxvi. 17. Not beyond Israel's borders εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν, the way that leads to the Gentiles; in the way of the Samaritans they may go, which passes through the midst of Israel, but not εἰς πόλιν, into no town or city of Samaria. Speaking to the Samaritans in the way or abroad, as in the Lord's own example (Jno. iv.), remained uninterdicted to them.[1] Christ Himself as the promised Christ was first of all a Minister of the circumcision (Rom. xv. 8), and in His own mission sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as he declares in ch. xv. 24, repeating His own words from ch. ix. 36, x. 6, with similar emphasis. In merciful fulfilment of the promised grace, to them *must* the gospel first be preached, and, in the same mercy which would prevent their stumbling and rejection of itself, to them alone. Hence the Lord remains within their borders, and only does not repel those Heathens who approached, and who were not repelled by the Jews themselves.[2]

If we now ask, what is the internal spirit and meaning of this decree, revoked indeed in the letter, for all future sendings

[1] Although, indeed (as *Braune* remarks), the apostles would have been equally at a loss, at that time, in dealing rightly with the *Samaritans* as in dealing with heathens—and would have, we may suppose, disputed with them to no purpose.

[2] It is in perfect ignorance of the fundamental ideas of Scriptural truth, that men like *Gfrörer* would save the free-mindedness of Jesus by the assumption that only the ebionitish spirit has imposed this limitation on the Lord's words. We cannot but observe how readily these people detect the roots of Christianity in a Judaism and primitive Christianity of their own imagining; how slow they are to seek them in the Old Testament.

forth of Apostles, the answer is near at hand. The first consideration to one who is sent of the Lord must ever be, that the immediate sphere of his activity should be accurately prescribed to him, and that he should know with precision whither he must not go, whither also he must. The wisdom of God in sending forth His servants (Matt. xi. 19; Lu. xi. 49), deals ever in various methods and degrees as it exhibited itself in Christ, who chooses for Himself at first the narrowly limited, already prepared sphere of his influence; first forms within this from among the susceptible and worthy the germ of His great work, and afterwards provides for its furthest and utmost development. This is the character of the commission of His messengers also. There are for them also, such as may be called Samaritans and Gentiles, thus spiritually understood; in order that they may not transgress, presumptuously and rashly, the limits of their specific mission for the present time. Even the Apostle to the Gentiles, whose instructions embraced all men, was yet conscious of the *measure* of a rule, of a district distributed to him by God, beyond which he would not stretch himself, nor allow himself to wander in his zeal *εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα*. 2 Cor. x. 13. And when we closely examine the words in relation to those who were sent to Israel, we find even among the people of Israel a selection made, and a still narrower restriction imposed. It was enjoined upon them, not only for the future, but for this first *πορέυεσθαι*, that they should seek out the susceptible, and already prepared among the people: comp. ver. 11. For such are, properly speaking, *the lost sheep* of the house of Israel; (שֶׂה אֹבֵד Ps. cxix. 176.) צֹאן אֹבְדוֹת Jer l. 6, which involves more than merely *wandering* from *home*, comp. Matt. xviii. 12 with 14.) Scattered abroad, indeed, without shepherds; abandoned each one to his own erring way in which, unless sought after, he must perish, and thus to all intents *lost;* but *sheep* still, who suffer themselves to be found of the shepherd. In a certain sense all Israel is, by calling, the Lord's flock; yet in the midst of Israel there are true sheep to be sought out, who alone have found the shepherd wanting. The wolves of ver. 16, at least have not the peace of the kingdom offered to them: even the good shepherd distributed to them their "woe," instead of "blessed;" though they might not hear His voice even in that. We think then, that the Lord here

in St Matthew does in reality speak of the sheep in the same sense as in St John's Gospel chap. x. 26, 27. It must be remembered, however, that the servant is not justified in saying of any that they are not the lost sheep, until it is most decisively proved that they hear not the seeking voice. Where we are constrained to suppose that we have to do with such lost sheep, our commission is bound upon us by the great Shepherd, and is to be executed, as is necessarily included, in the compassionate spirit of that Shepherd, not in the spirit of rebuke and condemnation, not proffering the word of faith in the spirit of a keen and impatient alternative, but in the spirit of patient invitation and allurement, going after them without weariness, until the lost are found.

Vers. 7, 8. *Πορευόμενοι δὲ κηρύσσετε*—is not a tautological repetition of ver. 6, but has its own distinctive meaning:—proclaim on the way, travelling round, going further and further, from one city of Israel to another, and announcing that the kingdom of heaven is at hand! Afterwards in ver. 11 it is presupposed that after some tarrying, they are always to continue their journey. This was the case, in the most literal sense, on their first mission; but it was also, in a more extended degree, characteristic of their full apostolical office, which was thus distinguished from the pastoral connexion with some particular place or district. Apostles must ever be *itinerant preachers:* to found and constitute churches is their province, but not to govern them individually afterwards. If St Paul did remain beyond the year in any one place, it is announced as something special: we may assume the same with regard to the others: and their continuance in Jerusalem at the first was a specially ordered circumstance.—The substance of their first preaching in the towns of Israel, coincides, on the whole, with that of the Baptist's (ch. iii. 2), and with the simple, preliminary announcement of Jesus Himself (ch. iv. 17): yet it is not without significance that the *μετανοεῖτε* is not found in it. For though they might not yet proclaim Jesus directly as the Messiah (ch. xvi. 20), yet it *was not fitting* that the groundtone of their announcement should be the severe summons to repentance, but rather the evangelical, "Peace be unto you: the kingdom of heaven is at hand: and will come even to you!" (Lu. ix. 2, 6; x. 9, 11). The degree of percep-

tion and knowledge which they had then reached, had ample scope for exercise; with the single restriction that they could not openly and publicly preach the name of Jesus. We may suppose that they with difficulty restrained themselves to that evangelic message; the confident joy of their faith was not yet strong and free enough to correspond with their Gospel commission, and, contrary to its design, they rather declined to the Baptist's ground, as is intimated in Mar. vi. 12. Yet more: John in the wilderness had already announced the forgiveness of sins as to follow his baptism of repentance (Mar. i. 4; Lu. iii. 3, i. 77): but they made the preaching of repentance predominant in the Gospel, which was committed to their charge, and thought they gave it only its due, until they better seized the design of their commission: repentance and forgiveness of sins! (Luke xxiv. 47). These are now both embraced, for all time to come, in the "preaching of the kingdom of God." (Acts xxviii. 23, 31, xx. 25): and that it is called the kingdom of heaven from the very beginning, forbids for ever all intermixture with the affairs of the kingdoms of this world.

The additional authority to work miracles, was needful to them as an authentication now at the beginning; for who would have believed these fishermen and publicans without some such credentials? And the Lord afterwards confirmed their word by signs following, until this in the course of time became unnecessary for their successors, and the demonstration of spiritual power in the cures of the soul's sickness took its place. The article is not in the original, but being inserted in *Luther's* translation, "heal *the* sick," &c., excites a false idea, as if they were to heal all the sick whom they found, whereas they were only directed, following their Master's example, to heal such as made this their desire. As it respects the "*raising of the dead*," we find this sentence wanting in the most ancient Manuscripts; it is transposed by the Vulg. and Syr.; and is inserted, neither in ver. 1 nor in the parallel places of St Matt. and St Luke. (Comp. Lu. x. 9, 17). It ought certainly, according to the true gradation, to have followed as the climax upon casting out devils (comp. ch. xi. 5): and we hold it as a spurious importation from a later time, since nothing is found in the first part of the discourse which does not literally hold good of the first Mission, and their

weak faith could not then be entrusted with this greatest power.[1] The direction, in a certain sense admonitory, freely to give what was freely received, does not refer to the working miracles alone, indeed only in a *lesser* degree to this, for none but a Judas Iscariot would ever conceive the idea of being paid. It embraces all that they have to impart, the exercise of their power to heal and their preaching of the kingdom at once, indicating *both* as grace to be freely offered. No gift of God's grace is to be bought and sold with money (Acts viii. 20), or as *Tertullian* says: nulla res Dei pretio constat. A comprehensive and most pregnant position, which cannot be too much laid to heart by God's ambassadors even to the present day; condemning all improper methodical and commercial stipulations in preaching God's grace, all payment that surpasses the limits of their need (ver. 10), and all those unbecoming perquisites which are ungracefully attached to the direct ministration of the word and sacraments.

Vers. 9, 10. The disciples might have supposed, after the command which they had received, that they must amply provide and equip themselves for such an enterprise; but the Lord forbids this: make no express provision for yourselves at all, go forth without any further care, even as ye now are! This is the general meaning of these expressions, which in their literal sense were adapted to this wandering mission: and St Mark and St Luke, even in their very brief statement, make very prominent this specific prohibition of all equipment for their journey. What each man then had, he might take with them; but purvey nothing to be taken on the way: μὴ κτήσησθε—St Mark μηδὲν αἴρωσιν εἰς ὁδόν, so also St Luke. Equipment for a journey consists of three things especially:—money, food, raiment. In St Matthew the first is made very emphatic, since all the three kinds of metallic currency are mentioned (in St Mark only χαλκός, in St Luke ἀργύριον for money generally) and the girdles also

[1] *Lange*, indeed, defends the sentence by arranging the ideas thus: help ye the poor in life (the sick) even unto raising them from the dead; the impure even unto driving devils out of them! But our main point is that here, at the *outset* of His instructions, as is proved by the subsequent part, the Lord does *not* only "speak symbolically," or with symbolical reference, but rather with a directly literal application of His words. As we could not conceive it said at ver. 1 that He gave them power over the dead, no more can we conceive it at ver. 8.

which served as *βαλάντια* (Lu. x. 4). This *πήρα* is, according to *Suidas*, *θήκη τῶν ἄρτων*, hence the two other Evangelists mention also bread. The *ὑποδήματα* of St Matt. (not as opposed, according to *Lange*, to "hard travelling-boots") are manifestly a second pair provided for change, in the same manner as the two coats. (Compare St Mark, which explains Lu. xxii. 35). Finally, the anticlimax descends to the minutest particular: he who does not possess one, is not to *provide* himself a *staff* by purchase (for all in St Matt. hangs on the *κτήσεσθε*). Thus St Mark and St Matthew are beautifully and simply at one in this, as also in respect to the shoes.[1] Many incorrectly think here (*e.g.*, *Sepp* and *Roos*, relying on extensively circulated information) of a difference between the staff for defence and the staff for leaning on; and even (as *Grotius*) of a second staff not to be provided; as in the case of the coats and shoes; but who ever takes with him a supernumerary staff? The reading *ῥάβδους* in St Matt. and St Luke is a gloss which has taken its rise from this misunderstanding, which not entering into the simple idea of the expression, would do away with the apparent contradiction to St Mark. Their harmony lies in this, as has been recently rightly said, that the *staff* touches the extreme limit of what was really necessary to be taken with them and therefore procured: not even this must be bought if it were not possessed already, which is the same thing as St Mark's taking it, if it were.

But this prohibition of all provision is, if narrowly examined, itself a glorious equipment; for He who thus forbids, thereby permits and commands them to expect in faith what they need; and to be fully assured beforehand of that which they afterwards (Lu. xxii. 35) were constrained to confess: That they should lack nothing. The Lord expressly makes prominent the foundation of promise in this prohibition:—for the workman is worthy of his meat! The word *labourer* looks back to ch. ix. 37: the Lord of the harvest, will not permit the labourers whom he sends, to hunger. It is, first of all, a common *proverb*, which the Lord, as His wont is, dignifies and raises to its highest meaning; but

[1] We leave it altogether undecided whether (according to *Lange*) St Mark aimed beforehand to remove a misunderstanding which was likely to arise from the literal apprehension of the original expression.

then it is also a *word of Scripture*, as St Paul cites it, 1 Tim. v. 18, scarcely meaning by his ἡ γραφή, the Lord's own words, but referring generally, as he is speaking of *reward*, to Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; comp. Jas. v. 4. On another occasion our Lord also uses the expression hire or reward, (Lu. x. 7); in substituting meat here for hire, He has (Num. xviii. 31) in his view, where the reward of the Levites' service is that they obtain what to eat; and St Paul (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14) appeals to the agreement between the Old Testament right, with the words spoken by Christ to His apostles. The workman shall receive *his* meat:—that which is needful and convenient to him, in order to his *working*, but nothing more: that is hire and yet no hire. He who does not work, may not eat: but he who does not eat, cannot work. The Lord will charge Himself with the care of this when extraordinary missions are concerned, and it is His engagement to provide this hire for those whom he sends: and through human means where these may suffice. Consequently it is a narrow perversion, and mere fanaticism of the letter, with which the Spirit has nothing to do, to impose upon preachers to Christian congregations or missionaries among the heathen, the literal obedience to these prescriptions of our Lord.[1] Our Lord never afterwards imposed it upon his Apostles in its literal sense, as He Himself explains it in Lu. xxii. 36. See 2 Cor. xi. 8; 3 Jno. 5—8. Even the *Gossner* missionaries have humbled themselves from their proud humility, and been constrained in their regulations to admit of the needful contributions of Christian brotherly-kindness: indeed they scarcely refused even formerly the guineas offered them in London, because they might carry no money in their scrip, and probably many a one set out from Berlin with his πήρα packed with more than a single χιτών. "For needful use Christ Himself had money, bag, and bread-baskets too" says *Luther*. The spirit and meaning of this first typical mission and its accompanying instructions, as it was intended to be ever developed in the Church, is no other than what the great and disinterested Apostle teaches us in 1 Cor. ix. It tells us ever that flesh must not be our arm, that we must not put our confi-

[1] As in a book, which made much stir in its time: Irving's missionary-school after apostolical institution.

dence in any mere external equipment and outfit; that we must lean upon no other staff than that with which the Lord furnishes us and sends us forth: that we must restrict our necessities to the utmost, and as disentangled and free as may be, go on our pilgrim and witness way. Thus, indeed, it does teach us that there should be no rich livings in the Church for any man, no high salaries, no gentleman-outfit in heathen lands, but—the workman is worthy of his meat, and there it ends. What in these first Missionary instructions is to be retained for all times and for all altered circumstances, the Spirit, who giveth ears to hear the true meaning of Christ, will teach: and from him may it be learned by all preachers, and bishops, and messengers to the heathen, and Missionary committees!

Vers. 11, 15. These further *directions for their conduct* in their preaching office, especially for Apostles or travelling evangelists with a special call, contain prescriptions as well for the *commencement* as for the *issue* of the testimony which they are to bear for the kingdom of God. For the *commencement:* go ye—*to whom?* As far as ye know and can perceive, first of all always to the ἄξιοι, among whom the Lord has already been preparing your way! and *how?* with disinterested perseverance, avoiding all abrupt change, and restless wandering about from place to place! Finally, and this is the main point, *with what?* What have you to carry and to offer? Peace, in all the benevolence of the sinner-greeting mercy and love of God. The *issue* of this offer will be, even among those whom ye thought to be susceptible, that some will accept your peace and some will not. In this *separation of character* let it be your *consolation*, that the unbelief of the hearer shall do no harm to the true preacher: but let your *action* be, when the decision is final against you, to shake off the dust of your feet, and leave the scorners to the full and interminable severity of judgment.

Vers. 11, 12. What is here termed ἄξιος, the Lord afterwards in Lu. x. expresses as υἱὸς εἰρήνης, after the well-known Hebrew usage of בֶּן. They who in seeking peace already have its beginning, though concealed in a sense from themselves—the τεταγμένοι for πιστεύειν (Acts xiii. 48)—these are the sheep, who hear the voice, and to find out and gather together these, could be the only object of the Apostles' office and testimony. These may be

found sometimes afterwards even among the scorners, and he who has not yet despised them, may be presumed to be capable of faith and willing to believe: but the regulation of the Divine wisdom absolutely requires that those who are perceived to be ἄξιοι should be first addressed, in order that their faith may become a good foundation for further influence upon them. The question here is not of *worthiness* as such; they who are thus designated are such as are fitted, adapted, disposed, prepared, fore-prepared to hear and receive these words. *Enquire* who in it are worthy! What a difficult problem; one which, as the Lord presently presupposes, we never can resolve with perfect certainty: yet should we essay it, and sometimes it may fortunately happen that we can discover even from the world itself, who are the children of peace concealed among them. The prudent selection here commanded is the other side of the same precept which in chap. vii. 6 recommends the witholding the holy things from the dogs and the swine. The *abiding* there till they go thence, that is, the seeking no other lodging,[1] was then literally prescribed to the disciples in opposition to the running about from place to place of the Jewish proselyte makers; and that for many reasons—not to awaken the suspicion that they thought their entertainment not good enough—to teach them the necessity of disinterestedly so acting as never to leave their work half done, and think it accomplished when it is only begun—and to guard against their too quickly giving up those whom they have once addressed, as if they had not spoken to the right. In its spiritual meaning this direction opposes itself to all πολυπραγμοσύνη, which begins in many places at once, holding out nowhere: exhorts at the same time to quietness and as much collectedness as may be in the midst of their moving onwards with the Gospel: and condemns and forbids all suspicious changes of office and station among the servants of the Lord. It says: Abide till ye *go thence*, as ye were *sent!*

Salute the house, into which ye come: and what does that mean here? In Lu. x. 4, it is forbidden to salute any man by the way, that is, with such kind of empty greeting as would cause delay and do no good, but the case now is quite different. So

[1] The prohibition to accept engagements (as we read in *Sepp*) is not to be thought of.

presently afterwards St Luke (ver. v.) teaches what kind of greeting the Lord intends, just as St Matthew in the next verse indicates by the coming of ἡ εἰρήνη ὑμῶν upon it: שָׁלוֹם לְךָ or לָכֶם was the Israelite's greeting, and this comprehensive and beautiful expression must be a reality on the lips of the messengers of the kingdom. They are messengers of peace, they bring with them and they publish peace; they would fain be to all, who receive their greeting, helpers of their eternal peace and perfect joy. For where, as among the Greeks, the salutation was χάιρειν, this word also becomes a reality in their mouth (Jas. i. 1; Acts xv. 23); they adopt every good custom which might be a fit medium to express the benevolent, condescending love of God addressing itself to man. They wish *good day*, or *good morrow* with full sincerity whithersoever they come, and with heartfelt humiliation uncover their head, according to custom, yea bend it more profoundly than others do, when their lowliness is understood. A servant of the Lord is truly *courteous*, for he has learned to be so in the high court of his king. When he has to beg, as the disciples then had, reception and entertainment, for his Lord's sake, He gives beforehand superabundant compensation out of the riches of the heavenly treasure which he has to offer. This word of our Lord condemns all that impropriety which would obtrude itself upon any man's house, without an amiable attention to laudable customs; all that official severity which, contradicting humility and love, so often repels the people; all that premature rigour of condemnation which has not paved its own way by gentleness and love. And it is here that we discern the stamp of the new, and gentle spirit of Christ. A prophet of the Old Testament, or the preacher in the wilderness, discharges at once his unqualified μετανοεῖτε over all heads and against all hearts; but a New Testament evangelist begins as a rule (for no rule is without an exception!) in a different spirit. His whole introduction and exhibition of himself, and not merely the first words of his lips, should express the *greeting of peace*, so that wherever he goes, and as far as in him lies, his feet may be hailed as beautiful. (Isa. lii. 7.) This is the spiritual and internal meaning of this direction, which, as it was given to the Apostles at their preliminary mission, indicated that their commission bore the relation of an introductory, pre-

paratory *greeting*, to the subsequent *μαθητένειν* and *διδάσκειν* (ch. xxviii. 19, 20). But it further teaches us in every age that this latter also, should always be entered upon and conducted, after the way has been paved by the introduction of the greeting of peace.

Vers. 13, 14. *House* is in this place, as in the former verse, equivalent to family, or the occupiers of the house. (Jno. iv. 53; 1 Cor. xvi. 15; Phil. iv. 22.) That the Lord, after having spoken in ver. 11 of an individual *τίς ἄξιος*, should now enlarge the idea to embrace the whole house, is important as hinting to us that whenever it is possible we should embrace men in their family relations, and make it our object to convert not only souls, but families, to Christ; even as the Apostles did from the day of Pentecost onwards. (Acts ii. 39). The Lord speaks of the house as worthy, and thus comprises those who belong to it in one person at the beginning: although afterwards in the deciding progress and result, He could speak the very different words of vers. 21, 35, 36. If it be not worthy—for ye will ofttimes mistake, and bring your greetings of peace to those who are not children of peace—then the error of your love, which is always far better than its too mistrustful suspicion and hesitation, will do you no harm, for the peace which they reject, ye shall retain. The Lord does not merely promise this, as the German runs, but the words *ἐλθέτω* and *ἐπιστραφήτο* are imperatives which say: so regulate your conduct that both may take place! Let it be in your lips sincere and earnest, that he who will understand and accept it, may indeed find that peace: take heed, also, that ye do not trespass against the unworthy, but may be able, with a pure and unsullied conscience, to take back the peace again. This prophecy, that such contradiction would happen to them, conducts, at the close of the first division of the discourse, to the second period of the apostolical labour; and hence we learn that in that period the apostles literally did what the Lord here prescribes for such a contingency (Acts xiii. 51; xviii. 6), and Paul himself indeed likewise; so that, as is presupposed in 1 Cor. ix. 14, this ordinance of our Lord to his fellow apostles was known also to him. In those narratives we find, at the same time, a plain answer to the question, so difficult ordinarily in special circumstances to be decided, as to *when* it is permitted us

to give up unbelievers, and, pure from their blood, to leave them and go on.

In this preliminary and greeting journey, the matter might be more easily and more quickly decided. The Lord says, In case any shall not *receive* you, nor even *hear* your friendly greeting (which presupposes that the object of their mission was generally known in Israel), depart out of that *house*, or, if all the houses did the same, out of that *city* entirely, and *shake off the dust of your feet!* This is a symbolical action of the sternest *testimony* (Mar. vi. 11; Lu. ix. 5), a sign, that must have its significant meaning. First of all, it is obvious that it declares—we take nothing from you, break off all fellowship with you, as Luke x. 11 explains it. That would give it to be understood: see, we have desired nothing that was yours (though only dust), we have not sought yours, but you! 2 Cor. xii. 14. And this meaning we may not entirely exclude. But in the heart of this testimony there lies, as ver. 15 shews us, the further consideration that they, taking back their peace, renounce all participation in the *guilt* of the contemners, and leave with them that guilt instead of their peace:—we will not be partakers of your judgment, we have done our part to you, and can leave you with pure hands. Thus we find the explanation Acts xviii. 6. Many have compared the symbolical denunciation of judgment in Nehem. v. 13, to which the shaking of the raiment in the Acts *seems* to refer; but that is quite another case, since Luke x. 11 indicates quite decisively a renunciation of fellowship, and their leaving the guilt behind them for judgment as the fundamental idea in this passage. (In 1 Kings ii. 5, the guilt of blood is regarded as attached to the shoes on the feet). If, as it is at least probable, since the Lord could have only referred so simply to a well-known custom, it was the practice of the pharisaical and bigoted Jews to shake off the dust of their feet when they come out of heathen countries, the Lord's commandment receives a new meaning, of most distinctive and significant force:—those who put from them your tidings of the kingdom of heaven, belong no more to the house of Israel (ver. 6), but they are no better than heathens. This admirably suits the transition to the following division of the discourse, which announces the publication of the Gospel to the Gentiles

through the Jews' rejection of it and persecution; even as it suits the more immediate transition to the following verse.

Ver. 15. The first "*verily I say unto you*" in this discourse, which forms the first concluding period, in order to pave the way for the prophecy of the future application which it will find in Israel, points far forward even to the day of judgment! For the ἡμέρα κρίσεως (especially with ἐκείνη Lu. x. 12) is evidently, even without ἐσχάτη, the last day (comp. Matt. vii. 22). It can be only at that day that a judgment yet awaits the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, long since dead in their sins, which would be more tolerable than that of unbelieving Israel. (Think on ch. viii. 11, 12). The more detailed exposition of this pregnant expression we reserve for ch. xi. 22—24, where it recurs with twofold emphasis, and is established on its grounds. We now only remark that the design here is not to say, that all who then rejected the first message of the Apostles would incur thereby an irreparable and fearful condemnation, but that *propheticallly threatening* He contemplates in the beginnings of unbelief its consummation, without cutting off the possibility of subsequent conversion and mercy in any particular case. Yet were those instances probably very rare, in which a house or a city (not to say a soul) which would not listen to the first tidings of the kingdom of heaven brought to them by the disciples, afterwards received the Gospel as preached by the Holy Ghost. For we must consider that this Israel is the people prepared by God, through long ages, for faith, and that since the appearance of John the Baptist, the testimony uttered amidst this people, had been confirmed by an ever-strengthening evidence of its Divine truth: consequently, this unbelief, which had its root in a hereditary obduracy, could only end generally, and as a rule, in entire hardness of heart. It is only over Israel that the Lord commands the dust to be shaken off, and this may have its valid application again in Christendom:[1] thus to act in the case of the

[1] Even in an intenser degree, when the matter is viewed as *Roos* views it: "If they were punished more severely than Sodom and Gomorrha, who, at a time when corrupt Judaism and Heathenism waged full war with Christianity, did not receive and hear one or two insignificant Apostles coming to them for the first time; what shall be the doom of those who have had the entire Revelation of God's will

poor, blind heathen can scarcely be justifiable on the part of any Christian missionary.

Ver. 16 very significantly marks the return of the thought from the first conclusion which pointed to the Day of Judgment, to another commencement in the words now first uttered "*I send you forth!*" This expression speaks more openly than before, of a future, proper mission of those whom He has called His ἀποστόλους. It is to this point, consequently, that that distinction belongs, which the Lord Himself afterwards made in Lu. xxii. 35, 36. This mission He speaks of, from ver. 16 to ver. 23, by anticipation, and, indeed, in plain expressions, which in their letter were scarcely even preparatorily understood, and certainly were not yet to have a present application, so that there is an actual *contrast* between this and the former fragment of the discourse. This *apostolical* mission, as is presupposed in the transition from the former and is expressly stated in ver. 23, was designed prominently, and first of all, *for Israel*, yet is there intimated in vers. 17, 18, a transition to a yet wider field. The simple relations of the first itineration, and the seeking a reception, and the greetings of peace, are now changed: the *persecution* of those whom He sends, and the rejection of their message is now predicted; this, indeed, is much more than the not receiving, and not hearing of ver. 14. Hence we find that the Lord *begins* now with what in the first address came second: He speaks of their *further conduct* on their rejection, vers. 16—20, and then of the *further issues* of the interests of His Gospel and kingdom in Israel (vers. 21—23.) In the directions for their conduct the *comprehensive statement* comes first (ver. 16), which just hints at their commission and preparation for it: and in such a manner that a more definite direction is *developed from it*:—(1) *Beware!* and that too, *of men* (ver. 17), for ye shall by *Israel* be brought before the Gentiles, ver. 18. (2) But *take no thought!* For the Spirit of your Father will speak in you, vers. 19—20. And what is the further and full issue of this testimony? Contention

in their hands for years, enjoyed both sacraments, have had multitudes of calls and exhortations to enter the kingdom of heaven, and yet remain impenitent?" On the other hand there are circumstances in which all this loses its force, where the Gospel finds multitudes of people who are *scarcely* better than Heathen, when, as *Lange* describes it, "only the steeple tells that Christianity is here."

and hatred instead of the proffered peace, the opposition of their enemies against the children of peace, who have accepted it, vers. 21—22. Nevertheless, salvation and blessedness to all who endure, ver. 22. Finally, a continuous and unceasing preaching of the Gospel, through the permitted fleeing of the persecuted into other cities, until there is once more a retributive catastrophe, through the coming of the Lord to follow His Apostles, and to put an end to this condition of things, ver. 23.

Ver. 16. We now have presented to us in the most striking manner, two plain contrasts, which are designed to excite the attention to the full and far-reaching meaning of the whole prophetic discourse. The former of these is reconciled by the mediating *I send you forth*, and in this the latter also finds its solution. Both are figuratively expressed; the former by a general human similitude, the latter by symbols of its own, which are taken from the deep symbolism of Scripture. *Sheep in the midst of wolves*—thus is expressed the position in which the sent will find themselves, by an ἐν μέσῳ which does not however stand merely for εἰς μέσον. It is spoken in the Æsopic style, but it was also a well-known proverb among the Jews, as we see in Ecclus. xiii. 18, and the Schir haschirim rabba, c. 2 §. 14, where God thus speaks concerning His people among the heathen. To send the wolf among the sheep sounds very perilous, but here the poor defenceless sheep *are sent*, contrary to all right and propriety, into the midst of the wolves! and not merely to live and tarry among them, but even to wage a war of conquest against them.[1] The *wolves* are, first of all, with a glance backwards to the Sermon on the Mount (ch. vii. 15), the false shepherds and prophets of the house of Israel, whose enmity (Matt. ix. 34), shows us to have already begun to break out against Jesus, and would be ever more furiously excited against the continual Gospel preaching of the Lord and His Apostles. But ver. 17 intimates also that it is the nature of *men* generally as well as of the wolves to encounter God's messengers with malicious hatred, and what

[1] According to Clem. Rom. ep. 2. ad. Cor. Peter here asked: what then, if the wolves rend the lambs? and Jesus answered:—then the lambs, when they are dead, will have nothing more to fear from the wolves! an addition the apocryphal and inharmonious character of which is apparent at once.

is the safe-conduct for so perilous a mission, what the equipment for so unnatural a commission, as that of sheep against the wolves? This is amply and superabundantly included and promised in the single fact, that the sheep have a *Shepherd*, who *sends* them forth, and cannot leave or neglect them in the mission which He imposes. He does not send them forth as wandering sheep, like those whom they are to seek out, and save from the fangs of the wolves (the mission is not *to* the wolves themselves),—but as those who know well the way wherein He would have them go. It is here—as *my* sheep! for that most expressive, emphatic, and majestic Ἐγώ must not be overlooked, which begins this new section.' 'In the preceding, the Lord's "I" only occurred at the close, (ver. 15), in the Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, but from this point onwards, we find the terms "I—for my sake—for my name's sake—I say unto you—whosoever shall confess me—I am come &c.," in increasing abundance to the end, recurring just three and twenty times. He sends His disciples even as He is sent by the Father: thus at last ver. 40. falls back into, and coincides with, ver. 16.

With an οὖν, which is derived from the critical ἰδού, and carries full conviction with it, prudence is first of all recommended to them; they must consider well in every emergency which requires it. Does the sheep put any trust in the wolf? Then the Apostles should not merely take care of themselves like simple sheep ordinarily, but actually unite the cunning of the most cunning animal in nature, the serpent, with their own simple nature as sheep. We find φρόνιμος in Gen. iii, as the Greek of עָרוּם, and certainly the Lord points back to that fundamental passage for the signification of the serpent. They have to do, in a world which is full of wolves, essentially with that one Being, who is once called the wolf (Jno. x. 12), preeminently; with that one Enemy, who is spoken of afterwards in ver. 38.; with serpents and scorpions and all the power of the old serpent, Lu. x. 19. The great point then is, to see through the cunning of the enemy, to set cunning against cunning; certainly to be at least as *wise as* the serpents. Yet not simply so, for they would then be like the wicked, and could not overcome them; therefore is the other most wonderfully and strikingly connected with it, which makes a counterbalanced preponderance,

and renders them *wiser* unto victory. What words are these, which could express the deepest truth and wisdom by a conjunction of images apparently contradictory, but which by that very fact awaken and stimulate the thought to understand them! Who could *forget* a saying like this, after once having heard it? Who could but ponder and investigate it, who holds it of any moment that *the Lord* thus spoke? First of all, they are weak, defenceless *sheep* as He sends them forth: then He will have them, and make them wise as *serpents*—no sooner are they considered such, than He will have them also be as *doves!* and what means *this?* The *tertium comparationis* ἀκέραιοι has been much inspected, though often not with that single eye which alone can see the truth in the Scripture. It has been expounded, through a misapprehension of the gloss of *Eustath. ad Homer.* μή τινα κεραΐζων *i.e.* βλάπτων, therefore *innocens* (Isa. xxvii. 4. Fury is not in me, חֵמָה אֵין לִי). And even—a view into which the great Bengel has been misled—κέρας has been imagined to be the root, as if it meant unhorned, without defensive weapons, which, however would be ἀκέραστος. (A marvellous idea, that the doves have no horns!) But defencelessness has been already hinted in the word sheep, and surely is not merely repeated. The antithesis to φρόνιμοι not only permits, but requires that we interpret it, as it has been beautifully and perfectly expressed in the German Bible, "simple or single;" though *Luther's* "without guile" is not incorrect, if it is well understood that it only takes away from the φρόνιμοι all *wicked* δόλος (Jno. i. 48). As sheep are opposed to wolves, so are doves and serpents, so *simplicity* and *cunning*. It seems a necessity, therefore, arising out of the very spirit and nature of the words, that we thus translate, even at the expense of a very obscure ἅπαξ λεγόμενον. Certainly ἀκέραιος is quite equivalent to ἀκέραστος, both being from κεράννυμι, and, therefore, unmixed; in the moral sense pure from all malice, without anger and hatred, without any such malevolent cunning as finds its issue in injurious conduct, (and what there is of truth in the gloss of Eustathius μή τινα κεραΐζων is to be regarded as no more than a consequence of this). Hesych. καθαρὸν, ἄκακον—Eustath. ἁπλοῦς πραΰθυμος—as also Etym. Magn. and Schol. ad Eurip. Orest. 922 cf. Phœniss. 950, have ἁπλοῦς. The dove is not merely defenceless, but innocent,

it knows nothing but that it is only a simple dove, which timidly flies away, and has resources neither for attack nor defence. And as in the *reality*, which alone could serve the purpose of the *figure*, this attribute of the dove becomes mere *folly* (see Hos. vii. 11, where Ephraim is יוֹנָה פוֹתָה אֵין לֵב), the Lord qualifies this simple innocence by blending with it the serpent-wisdom, just as He redeems the false, evil, devilish element in the serpent's cunning by the simplicity of the dove.[1] Taking both in their proper sense, the true wisdom of divine love is the result, in which the dove, however, (the spirit of God, afterwards ver. 20) remains superior to the old serpent. The article which is employed in the second simile—*the* serpents, *the* doves—points attention to the profound significance of these deeply stamped types from animal nature. And now let Rom. xvi. be compared, where in ver. 18 we find first the ἄκακοι who are liable to be deceived by fair speeches, because they are only such; and then in ver. 19, in the same sense as our Lord, the ἀκέραιοι εἰς τὸ κακόν who do not neglect to be σοφοὶ εἰς τό ἀγαθόν; further, also, Phil. ii. 15, and 2 Cor. i. 12, as essential parallels.

But what a marvellous *and* is this, which requires the union of the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove! This is easily commanded, may we say, but only pursued and attained with great difficulty. Difficult, indeed, it is, and requiring long practice: but He who requires it *bestows* it also: *He* alone who, in sending His servants forth, equips them for their mission. If thou wouldst see the wonderful union in its perfect exhibition, contemplate Himself; give thyself up to be sent by Him with an ever new commission, and let His spirit and mind be thine; so will He make thee what He requires thee to be; He will give thee wisdom as the instrument to neutralise and exhaust the cunning of Satan, and simplicity in thy aim in the love and peace of God, that simplicity which is a sound and single eye, penetrating without any mixture of folly the depths of the world's and man's corruption, with a pure and honest heart overcoming everywhere evil by good; "so that thy wis-

[1] The being wise as serpents (not guilty in their cunning) is something very different from being cunning *as Satan* (which might never be spoken of)—see upon this *Daub* in Judas Ischarioth i.179—181.

dom shall never degenerate into cunning, nor thy simplicity into ignorance or imprudence."

It is true, indeed, in one point of view, as *Rothe* says in his Ethik (iii. 345) that "the *true* wisdom is the simplicity of the dove." Yet has the Lord, on the other hand, conjoined them by *and*, and even placed the wisdom of the serpent first. *Rothe* himself acknowledges this as almost the most difficult of our Lord's requirements, modifies afterwards his former expression, and reproduces it in another form, that for *us* (who are never perfect in full and pure simplicity) the one must ever be the corrective and complementary test of the other:—the *true* simplicity of the dove can never be, and may never be, without the wisdom of the serpent.

We have evidently in the following verses both these distributed:—beware of men, in whom the serpent fights against you, with the wisdom of the serpent—but take no thought, speak what the spirit of your Father speaketh in you, with dove-like simplicity. Prudently taking heed, *assuredly*, *but* yet without care: thus the latter has the emphasis, so that we might say with *Braune*, "if there be any failure, let it be in the wisdom." It is presupposed, however, that there *need* be no failure, even in this.—On their first mission the disciples found but little occasion for this equipment; (although the Lord afterwards, Lu. x. 3, 4, in sending the seventy, repeats, not indeed the word concerning the serpents and doves, but that concerning the lambs and the wolves, in the same sense, and connecting it with the prohibition of purse and scrip). This time they returned to him unhurt without having been brought before the judgment or scourged,[1] but it will be far otherwise in the future, and our Lord gives them to know this beforehand, that when it shall come to pass, and Himself is removed from them, they may ponder His words. Jno. xvi. 1—4.

Vers. 17, 18. We have already discerned the significant connexion of this warning and prophecy with the whole discourse. This taking heed of men, even among God's chosen Israel; not merely of the open or concealed wolves (προσέχετε as in ch. vii.

[1] Scarcely might King Herod have had an Apostle seized and brought before him, as *Braune* holds it at least possible.

15), but of the *human spirit and nature* generally, in its contradiction and enmity, is just what had been spoken of as the wisdom of the serpent. The true theology teaches that all men are corrupt. God's last and perfect exhibition of grace to Israel, the consummation of all His preparatory dealings, has made it manifest, alas, that the Israelites also are only *men*, like the Gentiles themselves.[1] This expression already leads the way to the afterwards definitely announced transition of the Gospel message to the *Heathen:* and it also brings out the great truth, which, though not precisely exhibited at first in the case of *Cornelius*, has yet on the whole been universally attested, that Israel itself, in rejecting the Word, has turned it, to the Gentiles;—even as it was at the very beginning prophecied by Moses, (Deut xxxii. 21), with a yet more distant glance at the final re-action of the conversion of the heathen upon the Jews themselves. The Lord repeats in Matt. xxiii. 34, xxiv. 9, and especially almost word for word in Mark xiii. 9, &c., that which he now intimates to the Apostles for the first time, as awaiting them in the future;—compare especially St Mark's tenth verse interposed as a further explanation for our use. The delivering up to the *συνέδρια*, or councils (comp. on ch. v. 22), refers rather to the ordinary judicial process of the magistracy: but the scourging in the synagogues indicates the excited, irregular and tumultuous rage of the people as the impelling cause, and Acts xxii. 19 is a voucher that this generally was their lot.[2] Finally, before *ἡγεμόνας* (Proconsuls, Proprietors, Procurators), and even *βασιλεῖς* (as happened to St Paul in the Acts, and in Rome, for the Roman Cæsars, it is well known, were often called *βασιλεῖς*). This is, on on the one hand, a prophecy of persecution even unto death, which the Jews could only compass by delivering them over to the Gentile authorities; and, on the other hand, an anticipation of the rising greatness of His kingdom which should continue to

[1] "Sirach's counsel is very good—take heed of thy friends! (Ecclus. vi. 13). But the warning of the Gospel goes yet beyond that: *Προσέχετε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.*" *Hamann.*

[2] Thus the explanation of the *συναγωγάι* which Grotius has sought in judicial assemblies, is useless and incorrect. *Lange*, however, comes nearer, "now in the form of solemn ceremonial, judicial assemblies, now in the shape of zealot tumults"—only this latter is too strongly expressed.

develop notwithstanding all such opposition. Deeply significant is the antithesis, lowly in its grandeur, between the princes and kings of this world and that "For my sake" which He now utters, and which would remind the disciples of ch. v. 11. He Himself, who thus speaks, will stand before the judgment seat and the council, before God and Pilate, though He does not openly say so: and thus shall it be also with His ambassadors after Him. Their history is silent upon the fulfilment of these words in a multitude of special instances. *Εἰς μαρτύριον* has a double meaning, according as it is referred to *αὐτοῖς*, the Israelites, or to *τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*. To the rejecting accusers and persecutors it is a testimony for their own condemnation, for a manifestation of their guilt and enmity to the truth (as Lu. ix. 5). To the Gentiles, who thus hear the word, it will be a testimony, which will be instrumental in winning their conviction and believing acceptance, when in progress of time the accused (as follows in vers. 19, 20) shall thus boldly and explicitly maintain their embassage, and declare their mission. In the later discourse, (ch. xxiv.), *εἰς μαρτύριον* takes a wider range, and intimates the unbelief of the great mass of the Gentiles also. Therefore the twofold result of their testimony is blended into one, in order to teach the Apostles what their office would be in all circumstances:—to *testify* before every man, whether before kings in judgment halls, or the Gentiles generally. To hold fast this aim with pertinacious steadfastness is the simplicity of the dove, which knows of nothing but the truth: and this direction to hold fast, under all emergencies, their *testimony*, a direction which is all the stronger because given in the form of an indirect supposition, serves as a point of transition to what follows.

Vers. 19, 20. We naturally care more about the *how* than about the *what;* and in the injunction to act with the wisdom of serpents there is included a recommendation of such a careful, thoughtful, discreet management of the *how* of our testimony as will secure its being truly impressive and convincing. The witnesses are bound to prepare themselves, in greater and in lesser things, for the due discharge of their official testimony; as the Lord Himself teaches by these directions and warnings so explicitly and so long before given. The essential *what*, or the

substance of their testimony, which must ever be the same and unchanged, the simplicity of the dove itself takes for granted: he who is anxious about that, and fears that he may not understand and utter it aright, may well fear that all is not right with him. Such weakness may however exist, amid the terrors of the world's might: therefore the Lord says in His gracious condescension, *πῶς ἢ τί*, and includes both in *τί* in His subsequent promise.[1] In Lu. xxi. 14, 15 this is again yet more indeterminably spoken of, and Luther has there made the *how* prominent. Both must be pondered at certain times, the how and the what, only not in the unbelief of the fear of man, so as to border on *μεριμνᾶν*, or as it is in Mar. xiii. 11, *προμεριμνᾶν* and *μελετᾶν*, that is, anxiously meditating beforehand for the coming heavy emergency, and in Lu. xxi. 14 yet more plainly *προμελετᾶν*. This is as absolutely forbidden to those who speak in faith and by faith are furnished for their speaking, as the previous provision of money had been: although necessarily diligent prayer for wisdom is supposed to be enjoined, the neglect and contempt of which would be no other than a vain presumption which blindly looks only at the present moment. The greater the necessity, the more extraordinary, important and unlooked for the circumstances may be, the more careful should be the preparation for them in humble, believing appeal to Him, who sends His servants, who furnishes them for their task, and who works in them. To us poor and infirm successors of the Apostles it is not only conceded that we may meditate and even commit to memory our ordinary discourses, but it is made incumbent on us as a duty according to the measure of our infirmity: but when that which is predicted to the Apostles in *ὅταν παραδιδῶσιν ὑμᾶς* shall befal us also, then may we too, instead of our usual provision, lay claim to our interest in the promise given to the Apostles. *It shall be given you in that same hour,*

[1] *Hamann* lays great stress on the precedence of the *πῶς*, and says, "It is not of so much consequence, *what*, or *how much* children, and we then generally may know: but, of all consequence, *how*. It shall be given you first of all, and especially, *how*, and afterwards *what* ye should speak. This order seems to us, then, inverted: but it is certainly God's own, and sanctified by His use in all His ways." More ingeniously paradoxical than altogether true: for the *what* must ever be presupposed, and the *how* follows as the *specific* what in every particular case.

in which you need it! The same had in old time been said to Moses (Ex. iv. 12), how much more confidently may Christ's disciples expect it! *Given you* from above, from that God who giveth all that which, we having received, may dispense again (previously in ver. 8): and it is added τί λαλήσετε, in which στόμα and σοφία (Lu. xxi. 15), the how and the what are included. The Lord so unites them because the *what* given from above *brings with it* in the confident utterance of the lips, the *how* also in every case (that *how* not being merely the words and their form!); or, in other words, out of the simplicity of the firmly maintained testimony, out of the pure surrender of the soul to the influence of the Spirit, the true wisdom as to the medium and form of that testimony, must necessarily flow. The promise of the Spirit, who should speak by the Apostles, is once more a critical point which looks forward to the later, and properly apostolical mission; for in Jno. xv. 26, 27 the same promise is still given as for the future.[1] The Spirit of *your* Father:—for in this discourse, as well as in that on the Mount, and everywhere else, the Lord can only say, *your* Father or *My* Father, never *Our* Father. The strong assurance—it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit—presupposes as its condition their full consecration in faith, without care and without any mixture of their own independent influence. The great fundamental idea is here foreshadowed, which pervades the whole of the following representations, and especially the third part of the discourse, viz., that in the great conflict and contest of Christ's followers and witnesses with the world, their individual personality vanishes. As in all their enemies, there is one enemy and adversary (ver. 28), so in the disciples generally the Lord Himself is, in their words, the Spirit who testifies to the world; and even in their persons for their office sake, their Lord, (ver. 40).

Vers. 21, 22. He who in ver. 8 could say, Heal the sick, and

[1] We may not, however, say simply with *Joh. von Müller* (starting from the idea of our present theory): "Here is the evidence of the divinity of the Apostolical Epistles!" For the inspiration of *Scripture* is still, according to all Scripture itself, something more than this, in its narrowest circle yet more unconditional than the guidance of the Holy Ghost in their life and discourses generally. Compare our exposition of Jno. xvi. 13.

cast out devils! will not ensure these highly endowed servants against impeachment, accusations, and persecution. He who afterwards (vers. 29, 30) assures them that not a sparrow falleth to the ground, or a hair from their head, without their Father's knowledge and permission, yet now foretells them plainly that the persecution of His servants and dependants will proceed to the uttermost extreme; and, further, that it will be permitted of the Father, being His counsel and purpose that thus it should be with His kingdom on earth. And what is here predicted concerns not the Apostles and first witnesses *merely* as such, but all with them who with them believe, all who are Christ's in common; and in ver. 24, this universal application is openly expressed. Ye shall be *hated*, was already spoken in ch. v. 11 *to all disciples*. And see, further, the repetition of it as to the most distant future. (Matt. xxiv. 9—13; Mar. xiii. 12, 13). The curious and subtle investigations, as to whether this or that single expression in these various parallel passages, as we read them in the Gospels, may have slipped back from the later into the earlier discourses, cannot affect the question much, certainly cannot invalidate the truth of the representation given to us here: for it must remain assuredly true, that the Lord in His earlier teaching would more or less explicitly foretell the same things, which naturally were condensed into one great prophecy at the last for His apostles. In ver. 21, there is a threefold gradation: first the brother hates the brother even to death; then parents their children; and, finally, which most contradicts natural ordinances, even children their parents. The martyrologies of the first age of the Church's history give the fulfilment. Ἐπαναστήσονται probably refers to their coming forward as accusers or witnesses (hence not sister and mother, but brother and father), which follows the delivering them up, and has their death for its result: yet not without the general adjunct idea that they shall rise up *in revolt* against them; and therefore it is placed, where its exhibition would be most striking and fearful, in connection with the children's delivering up their parents.[1] Why, then, are they thus hated? For *my name's* sake, to which ye bear witness, even though there be no other evil thing found in you, rather all

[1] It was taken from the place in Micah vii. 6, afterwards in ver. 35 more fully cited—see there the LXX.

that is excellent and honourable. (Acts xxvi. 9, iv. 17.) Vir *bonus, sed malus, quia Christianus.* Wherefore, then, is this permitted? *Luther* seizes the central idea well in his translation —ye *must* be hated—for as the third part of the discourse brings prominently forward with detail and emphasis, the fundamental principle of His kingdom, that the fidelity of believers must be *tested* in conflict (vers. 32, 33, 37—39), so is it fore-announced preparatorily in this concluding period concerning *enduring to the end*, which recurs so emphatically in the subsequent discourses of our Lord. What is the *end?* First of all and especially, though without excluding the wider significance of the typical word (Rev. ii. 10, 26), it is that catastrophe which comes within the horizon of the second part of the discourse, and is indicated as a "coming of the Son of man;" and therefore the σώζεσθαι is the being saved from the impending judgment which should then burst forth; as it is also in ch. xxiv. 22. For that the Lord, up to this point, makes the condition of things, as it will be developed in Israel, the foundation of His prophecy for all times, we see immediately in the termination of this section, which leads the way to the commencement of a discourse which has a wider scope and more extensive reach.

Ver. 23. *Verily I say unto you*—this occurs just three times in this discourse, marking the close of its three critical periods; at ver. 15 concerning *judgment*, at ver. 42 concerning *reward*, and here? Concerning a coming of the Son of Man which promises both at once, the punishment of His enemies, and the salvation of His waiting people, their redemption and deliverance from all need, and from all oppression. In ch. xvi. 28, and Mark ix. 1 may be seen clearly confirmed, that which suits the whole context in this place, as we have traced it. The Lord here (taking us back at the conclusion to His first words "I send you forth"), speaks of His *coming* as a *judicial and final coming*, as always when it is spoken of as still impending after His *first coming;* nevertheless, He speaks particularly of that day of the Son of Man, which in the destruction of Jerusalem pre-typified the last day. Till the Son of Man be come, and puts an end to Israel, that end for which ye must patiently wait, and makes ready for His kingdom a new and free revelation to the Gentiles. This great

catastrophe is in the solemn prophecy of ch. xxiv. regarded throughout as a type of the final doom, so that many of the details in both are made most wonderfully to correspond. That external great tribulation which then came upon Jerusalem and the cities of Israel, was already less tolerable than the swift and instant judgment upon Sodom, and thus furnished a historical presentation of what the Lord had testified above in ver. 15. In general *Hofmann* (Weiss. und Erfüll. ii. 267) is quite right, that the coming of the Son of Man in judgment, authority, and majesty, can alone be here understood, and that thus the discourse must foretell the enmity and opposition of Israel—verily I say unto you, ye shall not, thus fleeing from one city to another, *accomplish your work* in the cities of Israel (τελεῖν, that is, according to the apostolical aim, subjugate them), before my (first) judgment comes, as *Israel's* general *conversion!* All very true, but the typical fulness of meaning in the prospectively figurative representations must not exclude the more *immediate* reference which is also designed. As the coming of the Lord to Jerusalem points onwards to the last judgment, so had that coming itself its faint and slightly marked type in the Lord's following His disciples in the places whither he had sent them on this first mission of all. This is expressly mentioned in the case of the seventy (Lu. x. 1), as here Matt. xi. has intimated it in the case of the twelve. Thus much of truth is there in the exposition, which feebly and incorrectly refuses to find anything beyond this in it.[1] How can we suppose this to suffice for the counterpart of ver. 15, for the assurance of final reparation, judgment, and salvation, after such things as have been shewn to precede in vers. 17—22! and indeed, properly speaking, the Lord did not come to His messengers, but they came back again to him. (Mar. vi. 30; Luke x. 17.) He speaks now literally and strictly concerning the later period (for that they could not in a few weeks travel through, and flee through, the cities of Israel, it was not first necessary to tell them!); but by obvious analogy His word would be felt, by those to whom He promises His *coming* after having sent them

[1] Alas even *Bengel*, against whose *interdum dormitare* we must, with all our reverence, be on our guard.

away, to contain some kind reference to the immediate present. The *fundamental idea*, therefore, in which all relations, the earliest as well as the latest, *reflect upon each other*, consists in this:—Go ye, whither I now send you forth, persevere in patient performance of your duty in preaching and testifying through all persecution, ye may comfort yourselves with the assured hope, that *I myself will come after* for salvation and separation. For every one sent forth by the Lord only enters again into the office of his *forerunner;* for it is the Lord alone who makes every proclamation, confirms all preaching, and demonstrates it with His power, whether unto salvation or judgment.

Let it be further observed that the Lord not merely permits but even *requires* the *flying* of the persecuted from one city to another,[1] yet not indeed to keep silence and lie concealed, but that they may again preach there also, where new persecution may assail them. Ye shall not have finished the cities of Israel, that is, have been able to preach the gospel and execute that commission in them all, for which ye are sent (Lu. iv. 43)—there is not merely refuge implied, but that it will be the region of labour still. That Israel remained, not merely, according to the old tradition, twelve years after the day of Pentecost, but till the destruction of Jerusalem, the assigned district of the labours of the Apostles of the circumcision, is here declared again in an enlargement for the second period of the command given in vers. 5, 6, for the first; and with this agrees the arrangement of the words in Acts i. 8 (where ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς, like אַפְסֵי אָרֶץ in the Prophets, designates, first of all, the limits of the land, as a type of the ends of the earth), as well as the practice of the Apostles. That only the cities, moreover (equivalent to πόλεις καὶ τόποι Lu. x. 1, καὶ κώμαι, Matt. ix. 25) are mentioned, is to be interpreted as conveying the pregnant intimation, that as they should not accomplish their mission in the cities, much less would they with all the individual souls that dwell therein.[2] This then is true in the widest sense, inasmuch

[1] Bengel holds a reading for genuine which adds to this text: and if they also persecute you in this, flee yet to another, a third.

[2] As Von Gerlach find in this word the hint, that we must be ever mindful how far, if not externally, yet *internally*, the circle of our in-

as no mission will thus accomplish the design of preaching throughout the earth (and must, after all, be content with bringing their testimony to every *people* at furthest), *before the Son of man comes*, yet once more, that is, in an intermediate future time before the final coming, converts Israel, and by that means brings in not only the fore-prepared πλήρωμα of the Gentiles, but all their might and multitude.

The third division of the discourse sends forth its glance to the remote and final end, promising by its third *verily* a corresponding *reward* which shall come at the same time with the judgment. And now rises into full prominence, released from the immediate present and the nearest future, most essential *prophecy*, as concerning Christ Himself, whose *cross* (ver. 38) is mentioned *for the first time*, so vital for all His followers in the way of their faith and testimony, and for the great and long enduring *conflict of His kingdom unto victory*. As the second part took its commencement from the conclusion of the first, so is it with this in relation to the second. First we have in vers. 23, 24, the *key-note* of the whole—as it happens to me the Lord Himself, so will it to my disciples! This discourse may be thus distributed:—the *warfare* is notified to ver. 31, but from vers. 32 onwards the *issue through warfare unto victory* is more definitely indicated, in its necessity and in its security. We must ask permission once more to adopt, in our more detailed exposition, the form of our *arrangements* as given in earlier works, whose I. II., A. B., &c, thoughtful readers, who can discern the spirit in the formal order when it is rightly given, will not be disposed to quarrel with.

I. The impending *conflict* (vers. 24—31).

1. The *following of Christ* incumbent upon all His disciples in *conflict and opposition*. He who was to follow (ver. 23) *goes before also;* He Himself opens and closes the long procession of His people, His true Israel, through the world and history. Isa. lii. 12: הֹלֵךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם וּמְאַסִּפְכֶם׃

fluence extends, and that no power of man can be in condition to make us, the servants of the Lord, inefficient or useless.

A. Laid down in a general position: a. negative (ver. 24); b. positive ἀρκετὸν τῷ μαθητῇ (ver 25).

B. A single example given for explanation, taken from past occurrences, whereby the disciples might note what was before them: they have called Him Beelzebub! (ver. 25). For see ch. ix. 34, xii. 24. But He was not diverted by that, but continued His testimony and sent forth His witnesses: hence transition to

2. The *imitation of Christ* in *unfaltering proclamation*, yea with ever-increasing publicity, so that after His own testimony has ceased the preaching becomes more effectual, aspiring towards, and aiming at, the goal and end which will make every thing manifest.

A. The fundamental note first: *Fear not!* (ver. 26).

B. But *speak out!* a. The general fundamental law, which, in every sense (as the exposition will show) demands this (ver. 26); b. Therefore with ever-increasing openness and clearness.

C. The same in detail: *Fear not!* Now, as the discourse progresses, it discloses more and more: a. That one only fear, of one only and real enemy which is profitable and necessary (ver. 28); b. But in the contest with him, trust confidently in the Father! (vers. 29—31).

II. The certain *issue unto victory* (vers. 32—42). This is, however, not declared immediately and without any enlargement, but is exhibited in a manner to strengthen this confident, fearless faith throughout the hard and protracted warfare, by showing the necessity of the warfare in order to final victory; and the last and most profound answer is given to the question: wherefore, then, must this be so? Consequently,

1. *The necessity of the struggle in order to victory*, which lies in this, that the disciples must be approved as worthy of their Master: the confirmation of the imitation of Christ by faithful confession and adherence even under the cross. This is the fundamental idea which mediates between the contest and the victory, without understanding which we can comprehend neither the entire prophecy

of our Lord, nor its long enduring fulfilment. From this point onwards we have positions more universal and of general application, the "ye" being now omitted.

A. Embracing both tests in one, with a foreglance to the all-disclosing judgment:—for this great *end* a test of fidelity is essential! a. Whosoever shall confess (ver. 32); b. Whosoever shall deny (ver. 33).

B. Returning now to the development of the intermediate ages:—The necessary *way* to this, as opposed to the false idea and expectation of the Kingdom of God and His Messiah. Strife and variance, which lead to the internal discrimination of those who are tested (vers. 34—36).

C. The confirmation which springs from this, from beginning to end; most clear and full expression of the ground on which such conflict is necessary.

a. First special examples of this derived from the preceding ver. 37.

b. Then exhibited quite generally, and, *a.* in prophetic figure, taken from the *cross* of the Forerunner (ver. 38). *b.* Finally, that peculiar and most profound expression, which is the very point of *the enforcement of the way of conflict unto victory* (ver. 39).

2. To this is appended as the brief but sufficing conclusion, the promise of abounding recovery of all that was lost, in the great Recompense, the *participation* of the disciples as well in the *rewards of victory*, as in the *struggle* for them. As certainly as he who is to be crowned must first be tested, so certainly shall he who is tested be finally crowned. Yea more than that, the rewarding compensation as an exhibition of the divine love after so long sorrow, will scarcely keep any bounds, where any are fit for recompense. The promise which winds up all is addressed especially to the Apostles, but extends beyond them to all the servants and witnesses of the Lord, yea, to all the persecuted and oppressed disciples generally, down to the very least, and to those who have received the least. Finally, and in the end, *nothing* remains *unrecompensed!* (vers. 40—42).

Vers. 24, 25. The common proverb, the immediate and distinctive meaning of which came before us in Lu. vi. 40, is here applied in another sense: and it is deduced from it as a further consequence, that if the servant should not think himself above his Lord, should not be proud when his master is lowly (Jno. xiii. 16), should not shrink from suffering, when his master has yielded Himself up to it—he should also, and this is the meaning here, not expect another and better lot than his master's. It often may be in ordinary human affairs, that the servant is above his Lord (Eccles. iv. 14, x. 7; Prov. xxx. 22), and so the disciple above his master: but then this is an exception to the rule, which the proverb rightly lays down; or to adhere to our first view, the proverb still continues right, for such exceptional master was not truly such, and such surpassing disciple did not, as a disciple, surpass his master. *Or*, the evil-disposed disciple may only *think* that he is above his master, as the ironical proverb says, which *Bengel* quotes on 1 Cor. iv. 8: πολλοὶ μαθηταὶ κρείττονες διδασκάλων. Between Christ and His disciples the word retains, of course, its fullest propriety, for He is Master and Lord in the only and absolute sense. (Jno. xiii. 13.) Passing by the *promise* of victory and reward which lies in the background of this prudential intimation—for the Lord will not fail to vindicate His servants, the Master will not deny His disciples in the never-failing victory of His truth, the Father of the household will not cease to provide for his own,—we would remark here, upon the gradational nearness of relation thus expressed. First, master and disciples, as also the Rabbins had their μαθητάς—then Lord and servants, as the disciples of Christ acknowledged Him for their Master and were sent by Him as His servants—and then once more, graciously relaxing this last relation, *Master of the house* and *they of His household.* Just in this way was the relation developed during our Lord's life; they who found in Him a Master and also a Lord, finally became His little children, the family around His table. Contemplating this relation yet more profoundly, the Lord was not merely the Father of the household while on earth, but continues such, and is now more eminently such, in His church (as von Gerlach remarks here). It is this which, with gracious consolation in His mind, He now *tells them.* The various etymologies

of Beelzebub or Beelzebul, about which contention is raised, do not affect the subject; for this is certain at least, that it was a name of the chief of the devils, and a particularly scornful one used by such as would not do him the honour of his more dignified name "Satan, the διάβολος." That charge more than once brought against the Lord, that He cast out devils by Beelzebub, was the highest exhibition given before the crucifixion, of that most bitter hatred of the truth, of that most daring spirit of outrage against the lofty one, which made all the rest easy. Not that they absolutely called Himself Beelzebub, as the Lord here says, but He pronounces on all its base wickedness, as a judge, according to truth, and with the deepest resentment of their insult, the true meaning of their words. He who is in league with the devil, hath a devil (Jno. viii. 48), is himself the devil! Finally, let the πόσῳ μᾶλλον not be overlooked, by which the Lord intimates at the last, that His disciples and household must expect yet worse than He. And why? Because the disciple is beneath his Master in the dignity of right and truth and power, cannot, in full innocence like Him, resist and attack the enemy, and consequently must lay his account to be much less spared than He. Did they fail to respect the Holy One of God, and push their outrage even to the utmost limits of the sin against the Holy Ghost; and how shall we His disciples escape that scorn, which through our failings is seldom simply the reproach of Christ, but too often our own desert? The innumerable and ever-renewed names of reproach cast upon Christian men, for the most part have their origin in some error or apostacy of their own, and point in warning and reproof to the follies which gave them birth.

Ver. 26. The οὖν is a real *therefore*, deducing the conclusion from the foregoing premise, though it may not immediately appear to do so. For we should discern and extract the *promise*, or at least the re-assuring intimation, which lies latent in the foregoing saying:—they have hated and scorned your Lord, and *yet He is still your Lord*, He has not suffered His mouth to be stopped, has still built up His houshold and His kingdom. The full force of this great consequence appeared first when that time came, in anticipation of which the Lord now speaks, after He Himself through shame had passed to honour, through the cross

had entered into His glory. Since then the firm foundation of the Church's confidence in defying the threats of men has been just that which is expressed in the Apostle's prayer in the Acts, ch. iv. 27, 28. But with this glance backward upon the Forerunner's way through conflict to victory, there is instantly connected a second glance forwards to that certain and final termination of all history, which finds its expression in a saying which recurs elsewhere in our Lord's teaching as a fundamental axiom for profitable application in many ways. (Mar. iv. 22; Lu. viii. 17, xii. 2). The double form of the maxim may be explained as an intensive parallelism, or as referring the things covered which are to be revealed, rather to *facta;* and the things hid which shall be made known, rather to *scibilia*, as such. Or, again, what no man could see, shall become visible; what no man ever heard or knew, shall become audible and perceptible—in brief, there is most assuredly coming a universal revelation of all hidden things. A vast assurance, the full meaning of which in relation to particular things, no human intelligence can exhaust or even conceive! But what means the *For* which makes this the motive cause for—Fear not? First, it expresses the *obligation* to conform to this master principle of the Divine government already in our present conduct, and so to preach boldly the whole truth without reserve. (It is thus applied in Mark iv. 21, 22). Then it is a *warning* given to God's messengers, against that *hypocrisy* which comes from the fear of man (Lu. xii. 2); for all faint-heartedness, unfaithfulness, neglect of His ambassadors, will be disclosed with the sins of the world, when both the one and the other shall be made manifest in the light of truth. Finally, it is a *Promise* and consoling hope for the faithful, inasmuch as they may reserve every thing for the great day of revelation, and refer every thing to it. (Col. iii. 3, 4; 1 Jno. iii. 2). And if the whole world reject, and misunderstand, and scorn you, ye shall one day shine forth as the children of the kingdom and preachers of righteousness (Matt. xiii. 43; Dan. xii. 3) to their condemnation. (Lu. x. 11; Ezek. xxxiii. 33). Judge ye already, then, the wicked world by the word which discloses the secret sins in the conscience (2 Cor. v. 11; iv. 2). Not merely in themselves before God, and in the consciences of believers, are the ministers of God's word approved as sent by Him, but in

the consciences of all men, even unbelieving men *in the sight of God:* and this will become fully manifest when the Lord shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and judge τὰ κρυπτά τῶν ἀνθρώπων. 1 Cor. iv. 5; Rom ii. 16. What a prospect and expectation is this, to enforce on the one hand, the renunciation of all the κρυπτὰ τῆς ἀισχύνης in ourselves, and in the other, the declaring without restraint through fear of man, the whole counsel of God, which we are bound to preach!

Ver. 27. "The Master bids His most confidential ones to reveal His most secret things, His most hidden ones to announce from the house-top His most hidden things; housetop and market place are the lodgment of the voluntary carpenter from Nazareth." *(Pfenninger).* What *ye hear:* this refers in as far as the discourse is spoken for the future, as a prophecy, to what they should hear from the Holy Spirit, who should tell them what they should speak, as in Acts iv. 20. For the inspiration of the Holy Ghost is addressed to the opened ear, Isa. i. 5. ; 2 Sam. vii. 27; Job. xxxiii. 16, xxxvi. 10. It is, however, immediately parallel with the former, *what I say unto you;* for it is the Lord who ever speaks by the Holy Ghost, and before the Spirit spake it He spake it Himself. He, the great *Revealer* of all secret things, commenced in secret His testimony; uttering, indeed, plainly enough for all ears which could hear, much of that entire system of truth, which without restriction should be afterwards preached upon the housetops and streets (Jer. xlviii. 38). It is designedly and strongly expressed, that He said to His Disciples, especially to His Apostles, much ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, as if shunning the light, secretly for temporary secresy, to *them* alone *in the ear,* and not yet to all the people.[1] But when these lights were kindled from His light, *they* became lights of the world in ever-increasing diffusion of their light, ch. v. 14, 15. In ever-increasing say we, and rightly; for this preparatory secresy of their Master, teaches the Disciples that ver. 27 is not to be followed with strict literality, but between the beginning of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which the disciples' ears

[1] *Sepp* very strangely and inappropriately derives this form of speech from the custom of the Synagogue, where the presiding elder first whispered the original text into the ear of the interpreter, who gave the sense in the dialect of the country!

alone might hear (ch. xiii. 11), and the final revelation of all hidden things (ver. 26) there must be conceived a gradual development and advancement of revelation. All truth should no more be preached everywhere and at once, than the Lord's peace, according to ver. 34, should be cast abroad at once and instantly, through the whole earth. That would be a judgment of the world before the time. There is, again, a similar relation of the apostolical preaching to the yet more public testimony of later times, as the Lord forcibly and clearly announces in Lu. xii. 3, with the same expressions as are used here. The truth must be spoken, and nothing but the truth: this is enforced, against all reservations which might spring from fear: but there is also a wisdom of love, which knows how much of truth to teach, and when and where and how it should be taught.[1] This is not expressed here, because it belongs not to the fundamental idea, and because this third section deals in great universal principles and laws, without giving, as in the former, preparatory instructions of special application, which the spirit in due time should provide for.

Vers. 28—31. Our general summary and plan has already shown in what light we regard the connexion of thought in this passage. In ver. 26, The *Fear ye not* is connected with *them*, but now in ver 28, it is critically opposed to another fear, which is commanded as alone profitable and necessary. In this command that *warning*, which we before perceived in the reference to the revelation of all hidden things, comes out into fuller prominence. A *promise* follows, which demands a confidence in their heavenly Father which should be the counterpart and resolution of that fear. First there is the assuring figure and example derived from the slightest thing which could exhibit the destruction of a living creature (ver. 29); then comes the reference to Christ's disciples, in another figurative example of the slightest injury that might befall them (ver. 30); and finally, sounds out most impressively the third—*Fear not therefore*! established upon the ground of that promise and assurance, ver. 31.

Ver. 28. Thus, then, they actually *kill* the body—it is not merely *can* kill. So much is permitted to them, and it is forcan-

[1] According to which sense *Hamann* wrote to *Lindner*—"One must first speak to the ear, and afterwards make the house-top his pulpit!"

nounced to His disciples, as it had been already in ver. 21, and Jno. xvi. 2. This is more than was expressly mentioned in ver. 25; but it is all that they do or can do: μετὰ ταῦτα μὴ ἔχουσι περισσότερόν τι ποιῆσαι (Luke xii. 4), and is that to be feared, and does it touch the proper *life?* The immortality of the soul, its undying continuance when the body dies, is here, as throughout the Scriptures, taught not merely as a dogma, but as presupposed and taken for granted by the unanimous *consensus gentium.* He only who as נָבָל has gone so far as to say אֵין אֱלֹהִים, and in denying the living God has contradicted the inner Voice which teaches even the heathen to apprehend a Divinity and a Hades, can persuade himself that his death is an annihilation of his personality. But this sense of the word concerning killing the soul is itself only a foundation on which to build something further and distinctive, which immediately follows. The Lord already uses the ψυχή, as we perceive, with the same transition from the lower to the higher meaning as afterwards in ver. 39. He directly speaks of a possible killing or destroying of the soul. The former member of the verse contains a perfect exhibition of the uttermost injury that can be inflicted on body or soul. Thus viewed, the question arises, may not wicked men, through their malice, kill the soul by seducing us to backsliding and perdition? and the answer is: assuredly, but not of themselves, not by any power of theirs to which ye are surrendered as victims, as is the case with your bodies; they cannot do it without your own will and concurrence! Beware, therefore, be on your guard, so shall they not touch your souls! Herein is the transition to the remarkable second member of the verse, which, as far as we remember, stands alone in the Scripture: for on the same word it has been contested, and is still contested, whether *God* or *Satan* be signified. For our own part we hold this contest to be possible only as long as we fail to penetrate into the heart of the passage as standing in its connexion. We have already signified more than once our assurance that we can only understand by him whom we must fear, the one pre-eminent and proper enemy and destroyer of the soul. Indeed, we are as firmly persuaded of this, as of any point in all Exegesis, that the Lord here means Satan.[1] And these are our five reasons:

[1] If possible more firmly so in this second edition, although the now deceased *von Meyer* wrote me that I had by no means convinced

First, The groundtone and fundamental idea of the whole of this portion of the discourse tends to confidence in the *Father*, who takes the life of the meanest sparrow under His charge, and much more, will not permit any evil to befal either the bodily or spiritual life of His children through any wilfulness of man. The correspondence then is exact: *Trust* only in Him who can *protect* you; but *fear* him who *would destroy* you, and both can and will *unless* you fear him!

Second, As the two members of the sentence run quite parallel, it is not permissible to take φοβεῖσθαι in two distinct senses, namely, to understand it in the second case of the fear of God, which could never in the New Testament at least, and assuredly not in this passage, be thus made equivalent to φοβεῖσθαι ἀπό. No, the Lord is speaking of an essential, proper *fear*, similar to what might be felt in regard to those who kill the body, but in the latter instance with the more emphatic μᾶλλον. It is just this *parallelism* of the sentences that is most decisive against *Alford*, who thinks it a valid objection to the reference to God that the construction is changed, and that it is *not said again* φοβήθητε ἀπὸ τοῦ δυναμένου κ.τ.λ. The δὲ μᾶλλον following upon μὴ makes φοβεῖσθαι the same in both cases.

Third, Who is then the destroyer of the soul, just as men destroy the body? and so much more to be feared than they, as the destruction of the soul is a greater calamity? Let it be observed, however, that ψυχὴν ἀπολέσαι is something quite different from ἀποκτεῖναι, it is the casting it into damnation on account of sin. The death of the body as such is not the death of the soul, but conducts it rather to blessedness, if the soul lives in God: so that persecutors rather benefited the martyrs than otherwise, by speeding their way to heaven. But *to destroy the soul:* that is never throughout the entire Scripture spoken of God, and to attribute this to Him here, would be indeed an ἄπαξ λεγόμενον *horrendum*. *Bengel*, certainly, compares Jas. iv. 12, but the simple ἀπολέσαι as the antithesis of σῶσαι (to deliver over to condemnation and ruin) is

him—that it was never any where said in Scripture that we should fear the devil! I take, however, *e.g.*, 1 Pet. v. 8, as having the same sense: and Rom. xi. 20; 2 Cor. xi. 3, with some others, deeply pondered, give the same idea. *Lange* (p. 721) has done justice to my argument.

far from being equivalent to ψυχὴν ἀπολέσαι in such a connexion as we find it here. God, indeed, *destroys* all flesh by a judgment of universal death, but not till all flesh has corrupted its own way. (Gen. vi. 12, comp. Rev. xi. 18). But the destruction of the soul, its *death* distinctively, proceeds not from Him: He *cannot* be said to inflict it, but only, as in the former case, to let that ruin manifest itself, which has taken place without Him. Ecclus. i. 12—16. It is not further *here* said, according to *Luther's* translation: Εἰς γέενναν (although in St Luke it stands, under another aspect, as we shall presently observe: ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς τὴν γέενναν) but ἐν γεεννῃ, that is, in Hell as in his province and domain. But Hell is Satan's kingdom, and there, as we know from Matt. v. 29, 30 (which should here be brought to mind), the *body* will, together with the soul, be tormented and destroyed. Should we, finally, take objection to the δυνάμενος as too strong to be applied to Satan; we may say in answer, that this, so to speak, euphemistically significant paraphrase of the horrible nameless one who is yet well known, all the better suits the character of Satan, who has actually ἐξουσίαν power and permission from God (Lu. xii.) first to hurt the soul as a tempter, and then to destroy both body and soul in hell as a tormentor (Heb. ii. 14). He is, indeed, according to Matt. v. 25, the officer who casts those who are delivered to him into the prison.

Fourth, Thus only, in consequence, does the true, and more profound sense of the whole saying appear: Fear not men, the enemies *of divers kinds*, who, if ye are true to God, can at least but *kill* the body (as man in his vain fear so terms it): but fear that *one* true enemy, with whom, beneath and behind all flesh and blood, ye have to do (Eph. vi. 12), who alone can inflict the real irreparable hurt! The essentially *wicked* enemy, to whom ver. 1 had already pointed, as of most import to take heed of and overcome. Take heed to your soul, and save it from him, the death of the body at the hands of men need not then be feared.[1] We may conceive how such a word must have smitten the heart of a man like Judas. But we should also reflect that such a warning would be always necessary for all the

[1] "Yet in the dens of the murderers, who can rob them of the mantle of the body, they tremble not; their souls unwounded and un-

disciples of our Lord, over whom is ever impending the danger of treachery and apostacy, and especially in the heart of persecution even to death. It would be very strange, however, and inexplicable, if He had united in one the command to *fear* God, who casts into hell, and to *trust* in Him as a merciful Father. Our faithful Master and Forerunner, who had Himself known by experience the tempter and destroyer, in our flesh and amid the enmity of the world, here exhibits to us in its perfection the highest master-piece of simplicity in wisdom; by which we should see in all other wolves *the one* Wolf, amid the whole generation of vipers the One Serpent, and with so much humble fear of the *Destroyer* as firm confidence in the Saviour and *Preserver*, pursue and make good our way towards the end.

Fifth and last, What we have found in this place is entirely confirmed in the parallel passage (Lu. xii. 3—7), and the expressions there used indicate to us yet more significantly the evil fiend. Ver. 3 has predicted, that the fearless and free publicity of proclamation would, even after the Apostles' testimony, go on to increase: and this is spoken as encouragement to them. In ver. 4 the Lord speaks to them further as *His friends*, thus assuredly with an affectionate and assuring tone, with which the immediate transition to fearing before God could scarcely harmonize. As *my* friends, my trusted household, ye have nothing to fear either in *me* or *the Father;* yet I say unto you, in faithful love as your counselling friend—think not therefore that ye may be above all "fear!" The great enemy is still near, and will desire to have you to the end—forget not that. Ye need not indeed fear man, *but*—and what now follows so emphatically and fearfully might suggest already to him who has ears to hear the frightful name of the Unnamed One—*but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear!* (How does this suit as a lesson concerning the fear of God, for ages known to the least in Israel as the great essential?) Fear *him*, which, *after* he hath killed, *hath power* (through the wonderful permission and delegation of the

restrained, soar into the light of heaven. *Another fear*, of another death, has thrown its protection around their hearts, so that the wicked fiend has no power irretrievably to destroy their souls." Thus beautifully speaks *Lange* in his Biblischen Gedichten.

Almighty!) to cast into hell; *yea, I say unto you,* τοῦτον φοβήθητε! We know not with what ears he can hear this, who can think of the Father in heaven.[1] It is *Satan* who hath killed wherever there hath been death, for all bodily death is from him (Jno. viii. 44); especially where men have killed out of hatred, and the subject of the discourse had been of such ἀποκτεῖναι (1 Cor. v. 5), entire humanity in a certain sense is concerned, over which the destruction of the flesh impends in death; and even as the Prince of Death is Satan considered a minister of the Divine righteousness, as well of its mercy as of its wrath.

Vers. 29—31. Στρουθία are πάντα τὰ μικρὰ τῶν ὀρνίθων, corresponding in the LXX. to the Hebrew צִפּוֹר; and ἀσσάριον also taken up into Hebrew as אַסָּר, אַסְתִּיר, אִיסָר is the smallest coin, and hence was in Jewish as well as Latin proverbial use to express the smallest value: בְּאִיסָר, בְּאִיסָר. Now even *two* sparrows are only worth one ἀσσάριον; indeed in Luke xii. 6 (spoken a year later) the expression increases in force, and for two farthings the fifth odd one may be obtained over and above; yet in the *providentia specialissima* of God not one single such little creature, not the slightest worm, is forgotten or left to be the sport of chance! There *shall* no sparrow *fall on the ground* exhausted or starved, or by any cause killed,[2] *without* the knowledge and will of the Father (not of the sparrows but of men who are His children). The Lord brings to our mind again,—we have found many reminiscences of the Sermon on the Mount *in* this discourse—that precious word (ch. vi. 26) to which rejoinder might be made:—Yet the fowls of the heaven do often fall upon

[1] Just in the same way as ourselves, with the same, indeed greater zeal against the wrong apprehension of this passage, does *Reichel* set it forth in his Isaiah (on Isa. xlix. 24): "Are not those horrible notions which men are taught to conceive of God the Father, as if He were an Apollyon, a destroyer of bodies and of souls; and which would impute such a meaning as would make Him inspire and inculcate a real dread of His Father!—Frightful exposition:—the Lord Jesus speaks of the Devil, and His words are referred to God the Father!—The Father, they seem to think, is a hard man, who strikes one, body and soul, into hell! About the Devil it is of little consequence, all is right with regard to him. Is not that a sin and a shame?"

[2] Evidently this is meant, and not a flying down which resembles falling.

the earth because they have found no nourishment; and similarly:—Yet the confessors die, and many of them even by the hand of the enemy! It does, assuredly, so happen, only not *without* the Father: this is the comforting assurance which the Lord gives. So far from *your* life being taken away without the Father's counsel and will, not one hair falls from your head without Him (Luke xxi. 18; Acts xxvii. 34; 1 Sam. xiv. 45), or as our proverb runs—*Niemand euch ein Haar krümmen mag.* They are all *numbered* by a Providence which cares for all and forgets nothing; as much so as the stars of heaven are, which man can no more count than the hairs of his head.[1] Thus the example of the slightest hurt, which we should not even spend a thought upon, is brought into juxtaposition with the being killed in ver. 28, in order to embrace whatever possible injury might lie between these two extremes. The concluding inference of ver. 31, already found in the Sermon on the Mount, is a Jewish proverb also, but is invested here with a higher meaning. The emphatic ὑμεῖς which so strikingly closes this sentence and corresponds to the ὑμῶν at the beginning of ver. 28, refers to those who are addressed, not simply as they are *men* (comp. Matt. xii. 12), but as they are children of God, disciples of Christ, heralds and witnesses of His kingdom, suffering for His name's sake! Shall one of these be forgotten? Shall not He, who numbers the hairs of your head, keep your head and your life in the hollow of His hand, so that *whatever* might befall them, shall not be without Him, but shall, according to the gracious counsel of His will, be for your final good? Thus does the Lord graciously condescend to convince them out of all fear; and further, as He often does, founds His encouragement and exhortation upon that valuation of ourselves which our own pride will never allow to be contested. Ye cannot doubt, surely, that ye are, each of you, of more value than many sparrows; then ponder well what follows from that! But the Lord utters this word with a profounder reference to the proof and testing of the chil-

[1] The counsel and will of God are often contrary to our thoughts. Therefore, writes *Hamann*: "Let all *our* speculations fall, like sparrows, to the ground.

[2] Talm. Hieros. tit. Schebiith. Fol. 38. col. 4. A bird perishes not without God, much less a man.

dren of God in the sight of the Father, to that *internal and precious value*, which by sufferings is to be *developed* and *heightened*. Apply it thus, He signifies, and know that just *because* ye are better than many sparrows, all this opposition encounters you, giving occasion for that firm and resolute confession, in virtue of which you will one day be publicly confessed by your Lord, as immediately now follows.

Vers. 32, 33. Just as in the Sermon on the Mount (ch. vii. 21—23) a prophecy of rejection from the judgment-seat of the Son was uttered against those who call him Lord, Lord, yet do not the will of the Father. There it was said, τότε ὁμολογήσω αὐτοῖς, and the word has the general signification, to speak openly of anything, according to its true character, comp. Jno. i. 20, ὡμολόγησε καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσατο. Tit. i. 16. We find it more definitely in relation to Christ in Jno. xii. 42, ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡμολόγουν, comp. 1 Jno. iv. 15. Here in Matt. x. and also in Lu. xii. it is not followed by the Accus. (as in Jno. ix. 22), but by ἐν, which, although founded upon the usage of the Greek, answers more probably to the Hebrew הוֹדָה with בְּ, which first indicates acknowledgment, then praise, and finally the honour and glory which are paid to the Lord God. While our Lord sublimely arrogates to Himself the judicial decision and decrees, and that highest personality, also, on the confession or denial of which all is suspended, He yet softens and qualifies the assumption by equalising and rendering mutual the relation: He who confesseth me, shall be confessed by me! The profound condescension of this expression is only appreciated when we reflect upon the Old Testament הודה ביהוה. He confesses the stedfast confessors as His own, that is, in reality, for the meaning can be no other, Himself in them. And that, indeed, not first at the last day—no, He confesses (or denies) *at once*, and with a reward which begins, at least, where our true confession is made. The significance of that great promise with which the great warning must run parallel, is now we should hope made so plain, and its place in the progressive connexion of this discourse so entirely vindicated, that it will not be possible to persuade us that it has been transposed from the later passages in which it occurs, to this earlier place. The οὖν binds it closely with the preceding, for that test of fidelity is still the question!

Be ye only so faithful, that the enemy may have no power to turn you away from Me: so may ye be also assured of an eternal recompense, and let that be your consolation and encouragement *before men!* But let it be also observed, that the discourse becomes ever more general in its tone,—πᾶς ὅστις, with the "Me" set over against this as the sole substance of all confession that is demanded. That no vain confession of the lips is signified, but the maintenance and consistent exhibition of discipleship in the whole life, in spite of the world's enmity and even unto death, is clear from the whole discourse, as well as from the passage in the Sermon on the Mount. Consequently, the *denial*, against which the threatening is directed, is not a transitory lapse of personal weakness, such as was forgiven to Peter, and such as very few of the Lord's disciples are free from, but the entire renunciation and abandonment of communion with the Lord. (Lu. ix. 26; 2 Tim. ii. 12). He who may have denied Him, yet without persistent obstinacy, shall find grace through repentance. "He who said to the adulteress:—hath no man condemned thee, neither do I condemn thee! will also say to us, and be more faithful than Peter was to Him, Though all men reject thee, yet will not I!" (*Baxter*). It is obvious, also, that while He requires the confession of the heart unconditionally, He demands the confession of the mouth only where duty and usefulness require it; and where its failure would be a denial. Finally, the conditions between us and Him are in this matter the same as in the forgiveness of sins (ch. vi. 14, 15). *First*, He acknowledges us in His grace, when He receives us with all our past unfaithfulness and denials upon us; then it is essential that we confess Him before men; or otherwise, His confession of us as His own, will be retracted and denied.

Vers. 34—36. What now follows down to ver. 39 forms "a circle of ideas which," as Wizenmann says, "never came from the mind of mortal, before Jesus." It is the subliming of all the prophetic expectations concerning the kingdom of God into the transcendent, and future, and heavenly; in perfect correspondence with the true sense of all prophecy, which never could, however, till now be so clearly apprehended and expressed. This is a testimony which is effectually thrown in the way of all who would build up the kingdom of peace *on this side*; from the Jews, whose

great delusion it unsparingly overturns, down to the last foolish builders in these last days. In Lu. xii. 51—53, the Lord once more repeats the same saying, and in the same connexion with His reference to His own sufferings and death in ver. 50, which we have here in vers. 38, 39. Nevertheless, although every thing in His kingdom looks forward to the beyond and the future, to the finding of *life*, in respect to all who shall be found worthy of Him, this heavenly kingdom does not give up the earth. Upon it, and in hot conflict, must the heirs of everlasting peace secure and prepare for their inheritance. "I came not to send peace, but a sword!" a terrible saying as it first sounds, but in the lips of Him, the Prince of Peace, easily to be understood. None but He, the Gracious and meek One, the Son of the Father's love, might venture to speak so startling a saying as this. That He does not mean the sword of Mahomet, is declared by the consentient testimony of His word, His life, and His death. From ver. 16 downwards, He has been speaking of nothing but the violence of the world's might directed against His own; but not one word has He said of their opposing force to force. *Sword*, as figuratively the opposite of peace, signifies, first of all, *war:* see, *e.g.*, 1 Macc. ix. 70, 73 in the Greek; and Jer. xiv. 13. But the war, which the Lord fore-announces, is the διχάσαι, division (Peschito, אפלוג) between those who accept, and those who reject, His peace. In Lu. xii. it stands *διαμερισμόν*, for which *Tertullian* in that place reads *μάχαιραν*.

First of all, the Lord gives a general declaration, in opposition to the delusion which sprang from a misunderstanding of the prophecies concerning the Messiah's kingdom of peace. He then sustains His own true interpretation of the prophetic word by a special citation from prophecy itself, using the language of the Prophet Micah.—The Prophets prophecy, indeed, of *Peace*, *e.g.*, Ps. lxxii. 3, 7; Isa. ii. 4, ix. 7; Hagg. ii. 9; Zech. ix. 10, but ye must not so understand them as to suppose that at my first *coming*, and without any further process, peace would be immediately *cast* upon the earth: for this is the meaning of the emphatic βαλεῖν, to which in Lu. xii. 49, a second βαλεῖν opposes itself. "Glory to God in the Highest!" necessarily precedes, "peace upon earth!" The second cannot be attained, but through the first, and the conflict which secures it: therefore

Christ, because He is come to bring true peace, is first of all *come* to disturb all false peace, and to excite discord which is as profitable as it is indispensable. The *peace of the house*, family concord, is the noblest and most precious kind of peace upon earth: but even this, if it rests upon false foundation, cannot be left inviolate, but must be disturbed, though our "gentle household-ethics" would preserve it at all costs. Peace is to be announced to the house, according to vers. 12, 13; but that very announcement effects the disruption of peace. Let the whole connexion be examined in Micah, where in harmony with this (ch. v. 1—4), the Messiah is predicted as the Peace, and His kingdom (ch. iv. 1—8) as a kingdom of peace; but then a preliminary war is indicated in the travail of the daughter of Zion, which precedes her bringing forth. The sin of corrupted Israel (ch. vi.) is the great obstacle, and the kingdom of peace cannot be established otherwise than as the late and final goal of a series of severe and painful developments (ch. vii.). The Lord takes the words of this quotation from this last chapter; regarding rather the general scope of the prophecy as a whole, than the individual reference of the words themselves: for whereas the Prophet speaks of sinful discord as already existing (though not without a glance, in vers. 5 and 7, at the enmity which God's faithful ones experience); the Lord here speaks of that discord which His coming *excites*, even where peace had been before; and hence He adds this meaning to the words of the Prophet. He would seem thereby to throw out the anomalous idea that His Gospel would have no new effect, putting the circumstances and relations effected by it on a parallel with the hatred and discord of men in their sins generally. The ἄνθρωπον at the beginning has a specific reference to the close of the citation ἐχθροὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, and contains a variation from the Prophet's words which indicates a deeper meaning. In Micah it is only אוֹיְבֵי אִישׁ LXX. ἀνδρός, that is, of a particular man; but the Lord more accurately describes by ἄνθρωπος, used as in vers. 17, 32, 33, men generally, as he finds them upon earth, when He comes and offers them His peace. The ἄνθρωποι, who persecute, and before whom the confession is to be maintained, and any individual man who will become His disciple, and confess Him, are in themselves alike. But when the Lord comes between them, there is

separation effected between that man who receives Him, and all other men, whether father, mother, or any dearest relatives: and his own household become the *enemies* of that man, who, though he hates none yet dares not love any *more* than Christ; the *enemies* of such *ἀνθρώπου* who cannot consent longer to maintain a false peace with *ανθρώποις* generally. The great necessity then is to give up every earthly human relationship for the sake of the household and kingdom of God! The widening circle of connexions is just the same as in Micah: first children and parents, then relatives, of further degree (*νύμφη* after the Heb. כַּלָּה), then *οἰκιακόι*, אַנְשֵׁי בֵיתִי in the widest sense. It has been incorrectly assumed that there are here three examples of disciples, two being of the female sex: because the young receive the Gospel, and maintain their stedfastness in following Christ rather than the old, and women rather than men. But the Lord takes the words directly from Micah, and consequently the significance of the selection must be found here as well as there, in the idea that these cases exhibit the discord in its most aggravated form: and the concluding sentence of our Lord confirms this. Once more, let it not be forgotten, though hasty readers of the Bible overlook it, that the *man* here is the confessor of Christ, and that this passage is the *counterpart* of ver. 21, looked at from the other side.

Ver. 37. Understand once more in parenthesis:—Such division it is quite necessary to permit, nay to occasion, for my faithful ones must thus approve themselves worthy of me![1] This oft-repeated and severe saying, (Lu. xiv. 26, xviii. 29) is grounded upon the word of Moses concerning the true priests and Levites (Deut. xxxiii. 9, 10), as this again upon the history in Ex. xxxii. 26—29. That which the Lord God arrogated in the Old Testament, with strictness which required such an outward exhibition: Christ now arrogates for His own *I*, which takes the place

[1] No sophistry can evade this. Roos remarks with sprightly truth, that the Redeemer did *not* say:—The unskilfulness, singularity, undisciplined speech of my disciples will, alas, attract to them hatred and scorn, ah that they were wise enough to come off well with the world! He rather takes it all upon Himself, that He Himself provokes men, &c.

of God.[1] Only He who is one with God could thus, like God, place Himself above father and mother, and demand an exclusive love, which should sacrifice even parental instinct. The principle of Matt. vi. 24 in the Sermon on the Mount is strictly applicable here. The rigour of the requirement, however, is gratified by the perfect graciousness of the promise involved in the ἄξιός μου. Christ Himself is the exceeding great reward of those who love him, the greatest lover and the most to be loved, above all others. Because He is and ever will be such, He can and He must speak thus imperatively for ever.

Ver. 38. A new and different meaning of the ἄξιός μου discloses itself here, inasmuch as the most loving one has Himself loved us even to the death of the cross! one thing is worthy of another by corresponding to it, (which ἄξιός also signifies): we should therefore follow and cling to Him even to disgrace and death. We, to whom that future, for which the Lord then prophecied, has become past and present, understand this well; but how marvellous must have been the sound of this word concerning the cross from our Saviour's lips, to His first disciples! *This* was not, like other sayings which He applied, a Jewish proverb, and was never found in Holy Writ.[2] This was more curiously and anxiously brooded over by his followers than all that had been intimated in the sermon, or expressed in Matt. viii. 20; it remained inexplicable to the disciples, as oft as He repeated it (ch. xvi. 24; Mar. x. 21; Lu. ix. 23), and they could never be induced to receive it even figuratively in the full force of the figure. He who will submit to the death of the cross, will establish also a *kingdom of the cross*, before the kingdom of peace and of glory can enter in. He might have said—*My* cross, but He only intimates this in the *following Me* (reflect upon ver. 25); He does not openly express it Himself, but leaves it to His Apostles and disciples afterwards to speak of their cross as *His*. The λαμβάνειν is a strong expression derived from the custom, according

[1] Ah that there were not an effeminate Church discipline, and household morality for God's own house too common among its rulers, who would at all hazards, maintain peace, even at last, between Christ and Antichist!

[2] *Neander* brings forward a passage out of Plutarch (de sera numinis vindicta cap. 9), where a similar expression, "to bear his own cross" is

to which malefactors on the way to execution were required patiently to take up and carry the cross on which they were to die. Even so must *every* follower of Christ *take up* the cross, which on that account is properly *his own*, and essential to his following his Lord. It is already prepared and laid upon him: that he should make one for himself is unnecessary and forbidden. But the following verse teaches us that something deeper is meant[1] than merely bearing external afflictions for Christ.

Ver 39. The *cross* involved the idea of the deepest *disgrace* and ignominy, which man could then speak of; and the Lord therefore made it imperative that His followers should submit to its infliction, when the wicked for righteousness' sake, and the unbelievers for His name's sake, would have it so. The *cross* also was the most painful *death*, consummated through the most tedious agony: and His will is, therefore, that we should stand ready and prepared to endure this or similar death, in the steadfast confession of His name. All this is strictly correct, but does not exhaust the meaning of this general and unconditional declaration, that *every* follower of Christ shall have *his own cross* which he must bear;—for not all the disciples of Christ are so evil entreated and scorned, still less crucified or cruelly put to death. That the Lord speaks not merely of preparation for extraordinary conjunctures, but of the regular, and indispensable daily course of His disciples, is evident from the letter of the expression in this passage, and especially from the remarkable addition to it in Lu. ix. 23: let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, *καθ' ἡμέραν*. We only find such a saying in this place, but its genuineness is most decidedly and certainly confirmed by the Syr. Arab. and Lat. versions. What then is that daily cross, which should never fail to await the follower of Christ, any more than the plague of every day (Matt. vi. 34), fails to await every man generally? Ver. 39 gives us the

found. But we are far from concluding thence with him, that *Christ* could have spoken or did speak without any conscious reference to his own death upon the cross—for we have other evidence in abundance concerning Christ's consciousness.

[1] This saying signifies very much more than that they must be ever prepared for the punishment of death!! (Schleiermacher zu Luc. xiv. 27.)

answer, and by this conclusion and inference the former saying concerning the cross must be interpreted, and not conversely.

We have once more ψυχή in that deeper sense in which we found it at ver. 28, pointing from the life of the body to a yet higher life. The striking declaration,—he that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it,—contains, if both sayings are taken literally, a perfect contradiction: consequently the *finding* and *losing* must obviously, in the first place, be understood in different senses. We endeavour to extract the consistent meaning by understanding it—he who is εὑρών to find it, and who *thinks* he has found it, by avoiding death and who makes it *his aim* to preserve his temporal life (Mar viii. 34 ὃς ἂν θέλῃ σῶσαι, Jno. xii. 25 ὁ φιλῶν) shall lose, shall forfeit it. But does this suit the second member—is ὁ ἀπολέσας he who *thinks* to lose it? Or he who aims to lose it? Here something that actually takes place is intended, especially through the ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ. *Consequently*, in the second place, ψυχή also must be meant in two opposite senses:—he who gives up his life in the one sense, shall receive it again in another higher and better sense, as *his true life*. Now, since the most obvious reference seemed to be to the cross immediately preceding, shall we harmonise it thus—he who loses his bodily life through bearing witness unto death (ver. 28), shall yet keep his life, shall find another, for he has only lost his body, not *essentially* his life or his soul? This will not suffice, for the promise would then have no distinctive relation to those who die *for His sake*, since in that sense the soul can never be killed or be lost. It is now time to think of St Luke's καθ' ἡμέραν, and of the ἀρνησάσθω or ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτόν which is connected with it (as also in Mar. viii. 34; Matt. xvi. 24)—*let him deny himself!* It is in this word that we are to seek the key and explanation of the cross, the meaning of that life, which must absolutely be lost, and be continually surrendered to a painful death, in order to the finding of the true and better life. The *cross* is the death of the old life for the putting away of sin, that the resurrection of a new life from God and for God may follow unto holiness. The ψυχή which is to be killed, which must be crucified, is the sinful self-life of the old man, which is truly death; and this dead life must be mortified and lost by an internal, continual crucifixion

and self-denial (of which the taking up of the external cross is only an external expression), in order that we may find the living life, our sanctified, glorified, and eternal life. Our Lord's teaching, therefore, is precisely the same as that of St Paul afterwards, in Rom. vi. 4—11; viii. 13. The promise, therefore, of an abounding, compensating life to all who are put to death by man for Christ's sake, however true this superficial sense of it may be, is only the confirming sign and symbol of an inward meaning, which has its application for all. This, then, is the last and deepest *ground* on which the necessity of the διχάζειν, (ver. 34), is based. For that which must take place in the world as a whole, must also be accomplished in the microcosm of every individual inheritor of peace, and eternal life—the separation and abolition of the sinful. He who does not comprehend and submit to this, consequently, in the retaining of his old self-life regards himself as having found his ψυχή, is lost: but he who gives up, in the fellowship of the cross of Christ, all that which must die and pass away, has by such loss obtained the gain of eternal blessedness. Thus the great ἐυρήσει forms a transition to the promise of *reward* and *victory*, after the struggles and the pains of the great finished warfare, whether viewed as external or internal, in the microcosm of the world, or the microcosm of the Christian's life.

But at this concluding point our Lord's design is to lead back His discourse to the point from which it started, and with which it must close, and to wind it up as one entire whole, which commencing with the first mission of the Apostles, rose gradually to all these high and lofty prospects. After having, therefore, spoken more especially, from ver. 32 downwards, with reference to all His future disciples with the formula πᾶς ὅστις and ὅς, He now returns once more to His first Apostles, in whom He beholds all their and His own future successors. Hence the promise of ver. 40 stands simply as it does, addressing the Apostles particularly by the *you*, and yet setting forth the promise as only *implicitè* for *them*, for He passes through them to a universal reference—*He that* receiveth you! But He immediately generalizes what had been said to the ἀποστόλοις distinctively, and in their highest dignity, and descends from three stages; confirming in the promises which He addresses to

those who receive them and believe, His ambassadors and witnesses of every degree as those in whom He will acknowledge Himself to be represented. The first word ascends even to the ἀποστείλας, from whom He came forth into the world: the last condescends even to the μικρούς, whom He nevertheless regards as His messengers.

Ver. 40. The δέχεσθαι refers back to ver. 14, and has now fully unfolded itself as meaning now no longer the mere external reception and hearing of those who in their preliminary mission brought the first peaceful greetings of the kingdom nigh at hand, but the acceptance and following of their whole message and preaching, with faith which leads to full discipleship. The *and* is a progression of the promise, and is at the same time equivalent to *as*: for in Jno. xx. 21, when the time of special fulfilment was now fully come, the Lord repeats the same impressive words to His Apostles:—as my Father hath sent me even so send I you. The words which we have here, had been before that literally repeated (Jno. xiii. 20), and with the additional intimation that the authority, which in its fullest force appertained to the Apostles alone, should be shared in his degree by every successor: ἐάν τινα πέμψω. (As in Lu. x. 16, the same is said to the seventy, with the addition of the opposite despising, and its consequence, which would not have befitted the character of *promise* which marks the conclusion here). But the *first* member—He that receiveth *you*, receiveth *Me*, is only true through grace; the second—He that receiveth *Me*, receiveth *the Father*, is essentially and fully true in itself. For no man, not even an apostle, can predicate of his relation to Christ the words and meaning of Jno. xiv. 9, 10; it is not so much in their case the person, sinful and infirm, which is concerned, but the *office*, in which the Lord acknowledges whom He sends, and will have himself acknowledged. He Himself even, in a certain sense, required to be honoured, not so much in His human personality, as in being the Sent of the Father: and thus it is that though one with the Father, He here humbly places himself on a level of relation with them. He draws His own up to Himself, while as the first and highest ἀποστόλος (Heb. iii. 1) he stoops down again to them. It is the same humility, always going side by side with His majesty, with which He places His

"Me" under the ἀποστείλαντα, even as He had said (ver. 32)—him will I confess also *before my Father* which is in heaven. The Son bears witness upon earth, by testimonies which perfectly accord, both to His sovereignty over all things, and to His dependence upon the Father.

Vers. 41—42. The three descending stages below the ἀποστόλοις are:—a servant, ambassador, witness sent of God, in general, who might be called in the New Testament, προφήτης, because the new apostolical dignity had now reduced what was once the highest, to the second place (hence ch. xxiii. 34; Lu. xi. 49):—a δίκαιος or righteous man before God, one who belonged *to His saints* (Acts ix. 13) though without special mission:—finally a μαθήτης even though he were a μικρός, or weak beginner, for out of these μικροῖς the δίκαιοι and the προφῆται spring, and the Lord will have ἕνα τούτων received also εἰς ὄνομα μαθητοῦ.[1] The *promise* is now given to the receiving and to the received in one, just as in ver. 22. ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι was fore-announced at once to the preachers, and to those who believed their testimony. The δέχεσθαι is also regarded in the different corresponding degrees, from the believing obedience which is paid to the testimony received down to the slightest refreshment which is afforded in the love of the faith to the needy man because he is a disciple of Christ. All is embraced again within these two extremes, similarly as in vers. 28 and 30 we observed between death and the losing of a hair of the head. Εἰς ὄνομα means, as frequently in the Mischna מִשּׁוּם, מִשֵּׁם, עַל שֵׁם, לְשֵׁם, for the sake of anything:—and in this that faith is presupposed even in the least exhibition of love, which makes its subjects capable of the reception of Christ in His servants, of the acknowledgment of *His* name, and only thus of the confession which will be rewarded. He who has done

[1] We do not feel ourselves under obligation to give up this interpretation, so conformable to the context, on account of *Lange's* opposition, whose profoundly abstract, *ideal* exposition we willingly leave our readers to compare with our own, and prefer it if they may. We refer, on our part, to the digest which we have given above, of the third portion of the discourse, according to which the great *conclusion* which extends to *all* the messengers of the Lord, naturally requires such "various degrees beneath the high Apostolical dignity."

good to the confessors of Christ, from merely natural feeling, *quand même* not *parceque*, derives not from thence any connexion with His legitimate and finally victorious kingdom. Yet does this "in the name" descend in its comprehension to the lowest grade of faith, even that which simply fears to deny to a disciple of Christ the cup of cold water; and the reward, as it is expressly declared, bears strict relation to the reception which His disciples meet. He who can perceive and acknowledge the prophet as a prophet, and the righteous man as a righteous man, will partake of *his* reward—"for through such reception he characterizes himself as likeminded with him whom he receives."[1] In the case of the μικροί, whose ποτίζειν is here something different from, and less than what is meant in ch. xviii. 5, the Lord descends below the actual δέχεσθαι: therefore He does not promise to such the reward of a disciple, but simply (as Mar. ix. 41), that he shall not lose *his* reward, that reward which is appropriate to him for that act. For every deed actually performed in love has its future reward (ch. vi. 2), if the right to it is not extinguished by preponderating sin: which brings to mind Lu. xvi. 9 (the preparatory reception into the kingdom of peace, even though only as a Gibeonite and drawer of water *cum spe ascendendi*), as well as Matt. xxv. 40 (where mercy will rejoice against judgment, Jas. ii. 13). Suffice that though the manner of the fulfilment of those sayings remains among the mysteries of the last things, thus much remains clear in this most gracious conclusion of far-reaching promise, that the Lord designs to comfort *His own* with His assurance that they are *regarded by Him as precious*, and that the estimation in which *they* are held by man, will be matter of man's final judgment; that the least thing as well as the greatest in the development of His struggling kingdom, and in the fates of those who struggle for it, is regarded and recorded in their favour! There will come finally a day of reckoning which will superabundantly reward all that will deserve reward. Against that day the Lord gives His disciples the bond of His third, "verily I say unto you," as the seal of His eternal Amen:—"I Jesus have said it with mine own mouth, I will repay it." (Philem. 19). Thus speaks He in His grace only of

[1] Krummacher's Elias, drittes Bändchen. p. 210.

recompence; but lets also the undertone of denunciation against those who despise proclaim itself to those who understand—ver. 15. (Lu. x. 16).

THE REPLY AND DISCOURSE CONCERNING JOHN'S IMPRISONMENT.

Matt. xi. 4—30; Lu. vii. 22—35 (xvi. 16, x. 13—22).

The opinion was first broached by *Tertullian*, that John himself in his prison had become subject to weakness and obscuration of faith, and had admitted into his mind doubts concerning Christ's person,—an opinion which was often refuted in earlier times, and, indeed, might seem to be very easy of refutation. We should be disposed, if it were urgently demanded, to concede whatever truth there might be in its fundamental principle, viz., that the manifestation of Christ's kingdom was to his mind too long deferred, and that He would, by this public and solemn question, challenge the Lord to answer him by quicker action. Scarcely have we declared this, however, but we must again retract it, in deference to our own clear convictions. Presupposing the contents of Jno. i. and iii. 27—36 to be true, it seems impossible, both on grounds of human psychology and Divine administration, that this Witness to the coming Light, created by God and sent as such, in order that all might believe in it, should have afterwards scandalized the world by His own unbelief. It is, moreover, just as impossible, that imprisonment should have proved too severe for the Man of the Wilderness, or that the Meek and Lowly One, whom His Forerunner had instantly felt, when He came to His baptism, to be the Lamb of God, the appointed *atonement*, should ever have been thought by that Forerunner too meek and too lowly in His journeyings of mercy. It is equally impossible that he who from beginning to end, bowed in such undoubting and profound homage before Christ, as the servant before His Lord, as the earthly before the heavenly, should ever have ventured to think of interfering with the Lofty One, by the slightest word of human impatience. But let us now directly observe how the Lord in His discourse imme-

diately commences in honour of John. He disclaims for him (not without a design Himself to contradict the misunderstanding of his message, which might possibly arise), in ver. 7, all inconstancy, and in ver. 8, all impatient desire of better days than he then saw, with a reference to his well-known character from the very beginning. Let us go on to hear, with ears rightly disposed, the impressive confirmation of vers. 11—19, where *the testimony of the Forerunner come, is made the foundation for the assurance that the Messiah is also come;* and we can no longer permit ourselves to regard the warning of ver. 6, as a hint which the Baptist himself required, and which might meet his own case. They who still think so, have not yet understood aright the whole discourse of our Lord, which indeed as a continuous answer most decisively explains the meaning of the question which had been sent. No, John acts in the prison, where He had heard from his disciples what He had received as no other than the "works of *the Christ*" (Lu. vii. 18),[1] in precise conformity with his own great function, to point his disciples to this Christ. Because, while they are dependent on himself, they are not thoroughly disposed to trust to his own words alone, he sends them to Christ that they may ask Him themselves; and for their encouragement in going, He meekly permits them to do this as from himself, and by his commission; careless of any misconstruction which might ensue, and leaving its solution to His Lord who well knows his mind.

Nearly thus was the question viewed by *Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact,* &c., among the Fathers. Now, indeed, I stand almost alone (even since the first edition of the present work) in the maintenance of this opinion; since most even of the later orthodox expositors, with strange earnestness declare themselves for an actual doubt on the part of the Baptist, a wavering or defeat of his faith, a "reaction from his earlier position," &c.[2] They can bring many arguments for their view,

[1] *Alford* is not quite right when he says that "this is the only place where that name (*τοῦ χριστοῦ*), standing alone, is given to our Lord in this Gospel." Properly speaking it is not so given here, but it is only designed to say, that John heard "the *Messiah*-works (of this Jesus)."

[2] *Lange* adheres undeviatingly by his opinion "that even the Baptist must be regarded as having been, for a moment, among those who

and some of them containing much truth in themselves. As a general position, for instance, we are willing to admit that believers, men of God, may fall, and from time to time have fallen, into such obscurations of faith: but we cannot, by any means, admit the application of it to the present case. This would not be a sudden paroxysm of weakness in faith, such as *every Christian* knows by experience,[1] but would involve the deliberate, palpable, public scandal of the retractation of the testimony, officially given at an earlier time, and of the utmost importance, by the same Person "who came for a witness" (Jno. i. 7): and such an anomaly would be without precedent among all the prophets, messengers, and witnesses of God.

The excellent *Neander*, even, expresses his opinion, that while "scientific knowledge and judgments, once obtained by logical induction, can never again be lost, while the powers of the mind remain unimpaired," the convictions of faith, which spring from processes of the higher life, are not so secure and lasting; but what shall we say to this, with the shifting, changeable scientific perceptions and logical inductions of our learned philosophers before us! We rather maintain, with the fullest assurance of right, that what comes to us from above as *revelation*, is far more immovably rooted in the mind than our philosophy and logic: and that most assuredly what is revealed for the administration of a testimony of the highest importance could never be left exposed to the consequences of the human infirmity of the witness, and thereby to the eventual public contradiction of that testimony. The Divine permission may allow it to be so with us preachers and theologians; but the Baptist whose prerogative it was to herald the Messiah into the Jewish nation and the world, occupied, in the counsels and plans of God for His kingdom, so high an official position, that we cannot suppose him to have been permitted by God to sink below it for a moment. We beg that *this* point may be carefully observed, as it is generally, in consequence of a want of adherence to the entireness of this

misapprehended Christ"—against which, the second verse of St Matthew, well weighed, already protests. *Ficker*, in his Sermons, "The Doubters of the New Testament," devotes to our text the third of his sermons, and places the Baptist himself among the doubters.

[1] Thus *Hengstenberg* in his Christologie.

plan, most unwarrantably overlooked. When John the Baptist testifies of Christ as the Lamb of God, that testimony must rest upon a perception unclouded and distinct, penetrating into the Scripture truth, and firmly held in the spirit: a perception and assurance, to say the least, as little likely to be lost as any logical induction! In *Neander* himself we perceive traces of a *suspicion* that his view is untenable and discordant, since he ventures to affirm that the author of the report of the doubting question could not have been acquainted with the earlier testimony borne by the Baptist to Jesus, else he would not have failed to notice it in his account!! How little disposed *we* are to concede such ignorance in the Evangelists, our readers well know.

According to *von Gerlach*, "John, notwithstanding his illumination for the earlier testimony, stood yet within the economy of the Old Covenant, and had *the same* internal conflict, as the disciples of Jesus had afterwards; for he found that, quite contrary to his *supposition*, the Kingdom of God did not appear in external manifestation of power." Actually *the same*, does he think, as that of the disciples while yet receiving their training and not yet installed into their office? And did not his *prophetic* illumination, about which we hear nothing in the case of the disciples, his *official grace* and *official consecration* make any difference in his favour? The Ambassador and his public character as such are too much lost sight of in the mere personal man. Nor is there the slightest trace in his earlier public testimonies of any proof that he did *intend* to announce a kingdom of external authority. They say further that "in his temptation he lost the tokens of the divine enlightenment"—but I would ask again whether an Isaiah in the economy of the Old Testament would have lost again such tokens? Now the Baptist is greater than all the Prophets before him, and stands upon the very *threshold* of the New Covenant. That single word concerning the Lamb of God reveals to us a degree of certain knowledge, which, while in harmony with the illumination of all former prophecy, left no room for the Messianic expectations to which the Jews of that age gave up their minds, and into which the disciples themselves also fell. If the utmost were granted, that he for a while doubted, pondered, wavered in his prison (which, however we do not believe); yet the open and public

question could never have been permitted of God! *Von Gerlach* again makes a move in the right direction, when he says that "it was his desire, at *the same time*, to direct his disciples to Jesus, through the resolution of the doubt"—to this we also adhere, but if he had desired the satisfaction of any *mere* doubt, for *his own* sake, he would not have asked, in a plain, broad question,—*art* thou or art thou not the Messiah? It is rather the very *striking point* of the question, which appears to be the doubting converse of his own previous testimony (This is He!), that in its background it presupposes him to mean (as all the people, after the discourse of Jesus would observe):—For my own part, I know and have borne my witness, but let Him tell you Himself, my disciples, that ye *may believe*. (Jno. i. 7.) Every thoughtful mind must have thus understood *this* question put by *this* witness; must have supposed that another meaning lay beneath it; something as if the minister of state should let the king be asked, if he were really king.

Finally, it is said that the "obscuration" which befell the "witness of the light," did not consist in any uncertainty as to the person of the Lord (this, however, is the literal sense of his question, which, consequently, is given up in its letter), so much as in a kind of "impatience" which could not await the critical time;[1] but we have radical scruples about this, for not only must it necessarily have sprung from a dreary lack of spiritual perception in John, but it would further involve a contradiction to that ever humble relation of John to the Lord, which would have rendered such reminding and prompting utterly impossible to him. *Lōssel*[2] lately has put this in the most objectionable form: "Scarcely was he in the prison than the time began to seem already long, before Jesus began to glorify Himself *in him* (?), and thus failing, he not only entertained doubts himself, but infected his disciples also." This is thoughtless and foolish language concerning the greatest Prophet, who himself well knew His fate as a prophet, and suffered patiently, all the more

[1] To *Hase*, "it was not doubt but *monition*." As *Lange* thinks "the question of John has not been sufficiently considered in the light of an impatient desire for Christ's open manifestation.

[2] In his Wochenblatte:—Der Fischer. 1845. No. 50.

patiently as he had announced for the Messiah only the death of a victim.

In opposition to all these various hypotheses, whether strongly or firmly held, of otherwise orthodox men, I cannot but take my stand with *Niembyer* who in his Charakteristik der Bibel (new edit., i., p. 57) firmly adheres to the right, against all these untenable views, and though not following the hitherto orthodox in other respects, does so with great simplicity of judgment; and with *Schleiermacher*, who sets out with the assertion that "John himself *could* not have entertained doubts as to the Messiahship of Jesus," although he then hazards the supposition that the words of the messengers have been by abbreviation placed in that false light. We think this latter idea not at all necessary. As those words lie in the record, John does not merely permit a question to be asked "for appearance," an idea which is instantly rejected, but with an earnestness which both Jesus and the people understood, bids his disciples to *go and ask Him themselves*. We cannot see anything inappropriate in this view, and its acceptance *alone* makes the whole procedure conceivable and comprehensible. "To direct his disciples to Jesus, *nothing more would be wanting* than distinctive explanations from their master," is the opinion of *Braune*, but we cannot agree to this, for in the case of the greater part of John's disciples, who were not induced to go to Christ, the direct contrary was the fact! Nor was it a "circuitous way," but the only one which would succeed with some, to send them directly to the Lord.[1]

But enough of preliminary polemics and defence, let us go to the text. What St Matthew communicates in this entire chapter, is a progressive series of sayings, spoken in continuation, just as they are here connected: and forming one great concerted discourse, gradually advancing towards its climax, which, in vers. 27—30, gives the most complete answer to the question which

[1] *Alford* will not altogether accept my view, but concedes that "the idea of his faith being weakened by his imprisonment is quite inconsistent not only with John's character, but with our Lord's discourse in this place." Be it so! If he now, being himself convinced, only desired a *declaration* from our Lord's own mouth, this declaration certainly was not intended for his own sake, but for his disciples, to settle them, to "set them at rest" as Alford himself says. Wherein, in that case, do we differ?

had been received. The Evangelist plainly asserts this in vers. 7 and 20, (in both cases alike ἤρζατο), and in ver. 25, ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς; and it is no objection to this that St Luke, who, in ch. vii., gave the greatest part of this discourse in literal unison with St Matthew, has afterwards recorded sundry repetitions of it as actually uttered on another occasion, ch. x. and ch. xvi. 16. We do right, therefore, to regard the whole, as it here lies before us, as the *discourse of Jesus on occasion of the message of John;* and shall take a general glance at the process of thought in its advancing development, before we enter on the exposition itself. The well-disposed reader, to whom our summaries have already commended themselves, will find this arrangement confirmed, by reading it again after the exposition has been read. The one fundamental theme from beginning to end may be thus expressed. The Lord speaks of the faith and unbelief of His own generation, in the twofold testimony extant in it, which both prepared for and offered the kingdom of heaven: the kingdom which was as assuredly come as the two ἐρχόμενοι were.

The whole resolves itself into three main sections—for in the things of God, we find almost everywhere a trichotomy. First is the direct answer to those who were sent (vers. 4—6), as an introductory preface, which already intimates all that follows: then (vers. 7—19), the continuous discourse to the people concerning John and the Christ, in their harmony with one another, and consentient testimony; finally, from ver. 21 onwards, the conclusion addressed to the faith and unbelief of His own age, uttered with the highest contrasts of severity and gentleness.

1. The answer to the messengers points out the manifest *signs of Him who has come*, both in His *dignity* and in His *humility*—as shown in miracles and in preaching, whose agreement both with prophecy and with each other, should be evidence enough for faith; and in that lowliness, also the subject of prophecy, at which unbelief takes offence. In this the two following sections are already sketched and prepared for, which may be defined as first, *intelligence* concerning the marks of the testimony now among them, but which so few believed, and then *warning* against unbelief; at the close of the whole, however, there is an additional invitation to faith, proceeding from most obvious mercy and grace. The indication of the signs in working

is directed apparently *to John* at first, from whom the question came; as the gracious One was not willing harshly to disclose before the people by any word of His the state of things in the messengers themselves, to their shame and offence. First, it is given generally, *those things which ye do hear and see:* then follows specific statement in consistency with prediction. In ver. 6, however, there follows another sign of the appearance of the Messiah, also the subject of prophecy, but which is a stumbling-block to men: and the Lord uses such an expression as must refer to the *disciples of John*, first of all, (a slight *contrast* with their Master being implied), and, at the same time, to all who are unbelievers. *Warning* and *promise* to unbelief and to faith, are here interwoven; and consequently we may regard μακάριος as being a prelude to the gracious invitation which in vers. 28—30 forms the conclusion.[1]

II. In order, however, decisively to prevent all misunderstanding of the mission, and that He may take the question, in the sense in which John put it, as occasion for a further and true answer to it, the Lord proceeded, when the messengers had departed,[2] to speak to the people *concerning John.* But He speaks of John as the Forerunner who had come, and consequently, at the same time, and afterwards more expressly, *concerning Himself* as also come. This is, so to speak, the predominant *instruction* and *disquisition* in the middle of the discourse, which lays the foundation for the *warning* and *promise* of its decisive close. The substance of its contents is:—the public, though generally discredited, *testimony of the days of John the Baptist, and of Christ for their contemporaries,* in its convincing connexion and harmony. *Specific instruction* (vers 7—15 precedes, and a progressive *reference to unbelief and faith* (vers. 16—19) prepares for the following most emphatic threatening and promise.

[1] Not that our Lord Himself consciously and purposely so ordered it. The harmony and significance which are preserved in a poetical work of art through all its detail, is not regarded as the result of an elaborate arrangement marked out either before or during the writing of it; but our comments upon the organism of the words of the Holy Ghost have been foolishly misunderstood, as if some such thing as this was signified.

[2] As St Matthew significantly does not omit to remark!

1. The instructive comment speaks in vers 7—11 of *John*, in vers. 11—15 of *Christ*; but the latter reference is veiled, as always, before the people, so that the name "Christ" is avoided: yet all who had ears to hear must have heard in His words evidence enough as to who that "Son of Man" (ver. 19) could be, who came as John had come! *Concerning John*, first, *what he is not*, convincingly to refute the misapprehension which might arise among the people then, (and expositors now): by an earlier figure describing the *earlier* John, the unshaken Man of the Wilderness (ver. 7), and then, in plainer and stronger terms, describing John as he then was, and *now is*, the same man in imprisonment, who even there is *consistent with his former self*, and does not, through inconstancy or desire of freedom, put a *question* concerning that *now*, which he had *then* so fearlessly *testified*, (ver. 8.) Assuredly, a most plain and undeniable argument! Then follows positively, and based upon this, *what he is*: not only *a* prophet, like one of the prophets, (still in transition from the negative ver. 9), but *the greatest* among all, and after all the messengers of God down to this time; the forerunner of Christ (ver. 10) himself predicted by other Prophets, the only one enjoying this honour save that One, who is emphatically ὁ ἐρχόμενος; and therefore the greatest of all the Prophets, *the Baptist!* (ver. 11). And if this man has fulfilled his function (for in his prison he is even now drawing nigh to the end of his mission), who then am I? The Lord does not now utter openly this question, yet it is decisively involved in these words, which only derive their full exposition from a general view of the whole connexion and spirit of the context.

And now, the *kingdom of heaven itself* arises before us in its altogether new dignity, so that he *in* it that is least, is greater than the greatest who are without, and at its threshold, as we find it still in ver. 11. It *enters in with power*: that is the meaning of the designedly obscure sentence (ver. 12), which is so arranged as to embrace the mighty, constraining witness which had been borne, and its results, both in the mighty opposition of unbelief, and the mighty pressing in of faith: blending the whole into one vivid description of the great crisis, which thus was declared to have arrived. It is *the Time of Fulfilment!* The time of prophecy, of preparation is past (ver. 13); the Fore-

runner, who is himself a portion of this fulfilment is come, (ver. 14); and therefore—but the remainder scarcely needed to be expressed: *He that has ears to hear, let him hear!* (ver. 15). This is the conclusion of the comment upon the circumstance which had transpired!

2. There now follows a reference to the unbelief and the faith which responded to that mighty testimony which was so publicly given to the kingdom of heaven in this important age. That reference, however, is predominantly to the *predominant unbelief* of the generation as a whole; for the circumstances of the case required this, the few who believed in the midst of so overwhelming a majority of unbelievers not being in the first instance regarded at all. The universal unbelief of the *childish* children of this age, which had nevertheless beheld and heard the most wonderful things, appears as uttering its own condemnation, dishonouring itself while dishonouring God. The *two who had come* are placed in opposition to their own generation, which, in its infatuation, would neither hear the law nor the Gospel, neither submit to repentance nor accept the kingdom of heaven: this opposition being first exhibited in a vivid and convincing simile (vers. 16, 17), and then in a direct, explanatory declaration, (vers. 18, 19). But, finally, there is an encouraging glance at the *rare and infrequent faith*, by which the *child-like* children of wisdom —her truly docile and instructed scholars—*justify* the revelation of God in the two-fold unity of its exhibition, and are themselves evidence and seals of the truth of the testimony both of John and of Christ (Jno. iii. 33).

III. The sublime and impressive *conclusion* is now sufficiently prepared for, which is put by the Spirit of the Father into the lips of the Son, His soul being first moved to holy *wrath*, and then by quick transition to gentle and inviting *meekness*. That which, in ver. 6, was expressed as a combination of threatening and promise, *warning* and *invitation*, is now distributed in detail; the *blessed is he* being resolved into *woes*, denounced against those who have been offended in Him, and gracious *invitation* to corresponding *blessedness* for such as come to Him and accept His yoke.

1. The threatening of impending judgment upon the general *unbelief* is as yet confined within the limits of *Galilee* (with allu-

sion to ch. x. 15), the immediate scene of our Lord's first wonderful works; the towns being named first (two of them being selected as example vers. 21, 22), and then the proud capital (vers. 23, 24), the specification of which contains a latent reference to Jerusalem.

2. The *invitation* to blessedness and rest for the soul, which does not cease, even in the midst of general unbelief, to sound forth in accents of meekness and patience, is put by the Father into the mouth of the Son, through an *internal* consolation, which He received at the same moment, stilling the holy violence of His indignation by the view of the Father's never-failing honour in His simple ones. Hence, the Lord first *answers* this secret inspiration (ver. 25, 26), by a lowly yet sublime *glorification of the Father*, which penetrates the good pleasure of God's counsel as the *ground* of the procedure depicted in vers. 16—19, and of the resulting faith and unbelief, though its wisdom the wise cannot comprehend. This is followed by the preaching of the Gospel to the poor and the wretched (ver. 5), bursting as a stream of love from the depths of this profound and mysterious principle. The Lord descends from the high contemplation of His eternal dignity, and the Father's eternal counsel, to the wretched objects of His gospel of mercy. The Father hath delivered all things to the Son, He reveals and imparts blessedness only through Him: but the Son *invites all*,[1] all, that is, who feel their misery and their need of Him, in order that they may find refreshment and rest under his easy yoke, and his light burden!

Here, then, the *answer* to John's question reaches its fullest emphasis and expression:—I verily am He, come unto Me, and wait for no other! Here, also, the Gospel of St Matthew (which being the first was yet written with the same aim as the last, to produce the belief that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*), reaches its first impressive concluding point, so that we may fitly make it the close of the first portion of our exposition.[2] We might pause here to remark and to adore the Divine wisdom, also, in the arrangement of the Gospels: especially to observe the

[1] Not merely the Son of David, and the seed of Abraham (ch. i. 1).

[2] Although in another, and more formal relation, the beginning of the *Parables* in ch. xiii. might have well formed the commencement of a section.

significant conclusions of St Matthew's chapters, as they progressively follow. Ch. i. closes with the most holy name of *Jesus* —ch. ii. with that of the despised *Nazareth*—ch. iii. gives the Voice from heaven, which testifies over this Jesus of Nazareth, *This is my beloved Son!* Upon this trilogy of introduction, ch. iv. follows with its close, designating and opening up the scene of His words and works—ch. vii. gives the grand conclusion of the first great discourse—ch. ix., after the first cycle of examples of His miraculous works, which already excited the enmity of the Pharisees, casts at its close the glance of mercy upon the great harvest then waiting in the land—ch. x., at the end of the first mission, directs that glance into the far Future, where *nothing should remain unrewarded*—and ch. xi. closes with this sublime, *Come unto Me!* And so also may it be seen in the same way how ch. xii. (chs. xiii. and xiv. in contrast with each other) chs. xvi., xix., xxii., xxiii., xxv., terminate respectively in the most significant conclusions.

Ver. 4 is indeed spoken, corresponding as it does with the words of the message, as if the Lord regarded the pregnant question as actually the question of John himself, and directed to him also His answer. But this is only the result of His gracious condescension to the weakness of the messengers, with which He sympathises even as their master had done; and we cannot so regard it as to say (with *Alford*) that the Lord would not have thus answered, had not the question come directly from the Baptist himself. Or, are we to receive the words of St Luke (vers. 18, 19), according to their plain letter, which in προσκαλεσάμενος ἔπεμψε, and yet more in δύο τινάς seems to intimate that the whole matter proceeded directly from John? No, St Luke, although He has not recorded the Baptist's earlier direction of his disciples to Jesus, and here appends an explanation of the subject in all its relations (vers. 29, 30), yet presupposes, from his earlier (ch. iii. 22), as well as from the immediately following discourse of Jesus, that his thoughtful readers will understand him aright, when he thus objectively relates the circumstance. The individual Evangelists naturally presuppose and take for granted rather too much than too little in their compressed re-

flectionless narratives: and *we* must remember that we have the whole under our eye. Nothing had lain nearer the Baptist's heart, since the first public manifestation of Jesus, than to direct his own disciples to Him, with an incessantly repeated—Behold the Lamb of God! This is He! We perceive this once and again in Jno. i. 29—37, and Jno. iii. 24—36 is an example and testimony *instar omnium*, of the manner in which John from that time to his imprisonment, dealt with and spoke to those of his disciples whose minds were not yet clearly convinced as to the claims of Jesus. Consequently, those who were *still* his disciples, who remained attached to him, and would rather adhere to him in his imprisonment than go over to the Nazarenè, were *eo ipso*, only such as could not and would not believe, that that Nazarene was the Christ. When St Luke, therefore, writes δύο τινὰς τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ,[1] He takes it for granted, by a presupposition natural enough to himself, though perhaps, if we may say so, not sufficiently mindful of Theophilus, that the Forerunner had on good grounds sent these men to Christ. John, who had said before,—but I must decrease! and who had a clear perception from beginning to end, of his one only duty to prepare the way, in his own entire course, for Him who was to come, knew that he should only fulfill his course through imprisonment and death, that thus he must contribute to destroy all carnal expectations of the Messiah, and then make way for Him to whom his own mission referred. It is an object deeply impressed upon his heart, to send, before his own expected death, all such as were not by himself convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus, to Jesus Himself; and He selects, from his own impulse, two among the number of those thus situated, possibly two pre-eminent doubters, for this decisive mission. His question, like that of the Lord Himself, in Matt. xvi. 13, has the benefit of the disciples in view. But when the Lord makes answer—Go and *show John again* those things which ye do hear and see, He only refers them again, for their conviction and humiliation, to what they had already done:—Tell him again, that he may again tell you—these are the works of

[1] The reading διὰ τῶν μαθητῶν, in St Matthew, though now preferred, is to us doubtful. At most it only freely describes the circumstance as it appeared—the disciples were permitted to ask as in John's name.

Christ! The question was, Do we *look for* another, are we, by renewed weary waiting, to expect a Future which never appears! The answer cries in impressive response:—No. *He is here*, whom ye look for, all that was to come is *manifestly before you*, to be *heard* and *seen:* prophecy has become reality and history before *your* eyes and ears, as well as those of all the people! Lu. iv. 21. The *hearing* refers first of all to the rumour which (according to Lu. vii. 17) had gone forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about, concerning the wonderful works of Jesus, and which had been reported to John. The *seeing* adds to this the then present confirmation to their eyes; for in *the same hour*, St Luke tells us, he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, so that no further answer was in reality needed than—open your eyes, and ye find it so! But then the words which follow, further embrace both the *hearing and the seeing* in one; and it is not without significance that what they *hear* comes first, thus placing the last-mentioned preaching of the Gospel before the miracles seen. (For here St Matthew is more exact than St Luke, who inverts this order). To speak quite strictly, the seeing must turn to hearing, the miracles must become words, and the works must be witnesses, that so, by hearing them, faith may come. The miracles confirm the preaching, but the preaching explains their significance: hence, in ver. 15 it is *only*—he that hath ears to hear, let him *hear!*

Ver. 5. The Lord had indeed, in a certain sense, said all in this first word, but He graciously points with His finger to evidences of His mission, Himself in deference to their desire performing for Himself the work of the Baptist to John's disciples. In exhibiting these in detail He refers to passages in the Prophets as fulfilled; but with a grandeur of application which should be evident to our modern scribes, in proportion as it is free from any such petty exhibition of personal marks and signs, as their wisdom, in a certain sense, rightly repudiates. The same *Isaiah*, to whom the Baptist had appealed when his authority was questioned, out of whose prophecy he had taken his testimony to the Lamb of God, is on that very account brought forward again by Jesus Himself. He predicts in ch. xxix. the siege and destruction of Jerusalem (but not merely of that which was immediately impending, comp. ver. 3 with Lu. xix. 43);

then the blinding and delusion of Israel; then the great change which will twice take place between the forest and the field, the fruitful field and the wilderness,—first in the rejection of Israel and the admission of the Gentiles, then finally *vice versâ* when Israel's hardness passes away, so that the *deaf* again *hear* the words of the book, the eyes of the *blind see*, and the *meek* (πτωχοί) shall have joy in the Lord. The same prophecy recurs with additional emphasis in ch. xxxv., the sublime concluding chapter of the first portion of Isaiah's prophecies. When Idumea is judged, the desert shall blossom abundantly, and the salvation of God shall appear: when the eyes of *the blind* shall be opened, and the ears of *the deaf* shall be unstopped, then shall the *lame man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing praise! That which in these two passages, pointing far forward to the final restoration of Israel, is predicted obviously, as we say, in a *spiritual* meaning, as *typical* of internal spiritual healing (though the second of them includes external prosperity), our Lord indicates here to have received also a physical fulfilment, or as *embodied* in His miracles of healing. He quotes, in the same manner as His Evangelist does, Matt. viii. 17: for in the living relation between prophecy and fulfilment there is a reciprocal alternation, so that prophetic announcements which were delivered in sensible figures are illustrated in their spiritual reality, and on the other hand, predictions not intended in their external sense, are nevertheless fulfilled, over and above, in physical embodiment. (The entrance of Christ into Jerusalem upon the ass, as the Prince of Peace, is an instance in point). The Messiah's miracles of healing, as such, and as physical in themselves, could not be predicted, since prophecy deals with the internal meaning and mystery of things; they could only be contemplated in the same signification which they bear to those who behold them in their external and actual appearance, viz., as *symbols of spiritual healing*. The accordance, first, between Christ's preaching of salvation to the poor and the miserable, and His beneficent miracles of healing, and then the accordance of both these, of what is both heard and seen in Him, with the Scriptures concerning Him who was to come, constitute His works a *sign* and testimony that *it is He*.

The Lord, proposing to give examples of His works—the *miracula prædicta, beneficia, multa, varia* (Bengel) which testify

of Him, constructs a gradation of three members, each being two-fold by the conjunction of *καί*, (which St Luke does not observe). He mentions the *blind* and the *lame* first, out of the prophecies, one being taken from each; He then connects the *deaf*, found in both these passages, with the *lepers*, found in neither. Isaiah's saying concerning the *dumb* is passed over, as also much else in the reality of fulfilment: For instance, the casting out of devils (which in St Luke, ver. 21, had just taken place before their eyes) is included in the healing of the sick. For the Lord who takes no delight in the detailed relation of His own works, though He must now condescend to it, hastens with profound meaning to that greatest act, which transcended all prophecy or expectation—*the dead are raised up*—in order to connect it, for its right interpretation, with the *πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται*. For it was already a proverb among the Jews, that God always goes beyond His promised grace, and gives ever in addition something new and still greater. There must of course have taken place more awakenings of the dead than *one*, when the Lord said this; we read of the first in Matt. ix., St Luke has recorded the other at Nain, and this also was included in all those things which the disciples of John shewed him of.[1] Now, because the works of Jesus had gone so far as the raising of the dead, and yet he did nothing further for the expedition of His kingdom or the deliverance of their imprisoned master, the disciples of John told him of these things with some mixture of displeasure and offence at such a procedure, just as before in Jno. iii. 26. The Lord penetrates all this. He does not now say—and captives have deliverance preached to them, according to His quotation from Isa. lxi. 1 at Nazareth, where the spiritual meaning was plain. Still less does He say—and the kingdom of God is made manifest, which, *uttered now*, neither the people nor the disciples were capable of understanding. But He quite unexpectedly, though rightly, according to prophecy and fulfilment, appends to the greatest miracle of raising the dead that last *and greatest of all testimonies*, which itself exhibits the true

[1] It is equivalent to certain, by internal evidence, that the young man at Nain was raised *after* the daughter of Jairus: and so the various reading *τῷ* for *τῇ ἑξῆς*, Lu. vii. 11 (overlooked by *Ebrard*) acquires a decisive significance in the harmony.

significance of all the former—*the preaching of the Gospel to the poor!*[1] This last is taken at once from Isa. lxi. 1, and xxix. 19: the εὐαγγελίζονται falling at the close of the answer, carries with it the emphasis that the kingdom of heaven is come: the πτωχοί are, first of all, the externally mean, to whom, without money and without Rabbinical price, the joyful tidings are announced as a free gift, but also, and essentially, the poor and mournful in spirit, such as those of which Isa. lxi. 1 speaks.[2] The *preaching of repentance* went forth also to the rich and the exalted, yea, rightly understood, to those distinctively: the Gospel belongs to the low and the miserable. The preaching continues ever to this day, and produces in men's souls all these *works of Christ*, of which history is full, and more abounding and truly than might then have been heard and seen with bodily eyes and ears. The blind see (Acts xxvi. 18) &c., the dead arise, hearing the voice of the Son of God (Jno. v. 25), which is immediately connected with the former by καί.[3] Those who sit in the prison-house hear of it when it is announced to them by those, who yet know not themselves the meaning of what they say. Or who will not know and embrace it, for there follows one more καί, which introduces the critical *seventh* member of the paragraph.

Ver 6. This καί is not But:—the *offence* of many at the humble circumstances of the Messiah, notwithstanding all His wonderful works, is also a token and sign of His person derived from prophecy. (Isa. lii. 13, 14, liii. 2, viii. 14.) The Lord gives utterance, thus, to what he had ofttimes experienced since His first manifestation in Nazareth, to what had, alas, become now as well known as His works themselves. But it is *not* included in that which they had heard and seen, and should tell *John*

[1] For thus must it be translated, comp. 2 Sam. xviii. 31, LXX; and with another subject in the passive, Lu. xvi. 16. That the poor preached the Gospel, cannot be the question here.

[2] Certainly not, as *Schleiermacher* supposed: "Those who are not in condition in the *legal* sense to shine out, πτωχοὶ κατὰ νόμον καὶ παράδοσιν."

[3] This is the true element in Schleiermacher's strange idea that the raising of the dead is only to be taken figuratively, since otherwise there would be a tone of *vain-glory* quite foreign to the manner of Jesus. How has this great theologian stumbled and lost his way, when the true exposition of *Scripture* is concerned!

again, but (as if to intimate that) this manner of speaking passes into *warning*, which might be applicable to the *disciples* themselves whom He addressed.[1] I know well that *ye* have yet somewhat in your hearts against me; else would ye not have come to ask, when the answer which ye have received had been already so plainly given. The truly *poor* understand the Gospel message, and receive it in faith, so that they rejoice in the Lord. To all others the works testify aloud: *This is He!* yet the preaching which they also hear, being no more than preaching, so that even the raising of the dead is no more than a call to dead souls to life in God, shows them the great truth, that He is *not such a Messiah* as they expected and would have! To him who gives not his heart to the preaching, all miracles are vain for its explanation, and remain themselves misunderstood. Thus, then, the Lord gave a plain and concise answer to a plain and concise question—and the concluding words precisely touch the spirit that put the question. Instead of crying—*I am He!* (which indeed would have been but of little service), He searches out in these disciples, and in the people (with regard to whom this last saying was a transition to the following discourse) all that unbelief and delusion which stood in the way of the acknowledgment of Himself, in order that their faith might be excited to overcome all offence, and respond to him—*Yea, Thou art He!* To Him, who presently afterwards proclaims His wonderful *I* in kingly majesty over all things and over all persons, but now for the time restrains it, though with all His humility it cannot but come forward in the final words of His reply, in the σκανδαλισθῇ ἐν ἐμοί.

Ver 7—11. Now first, as the disciples departed or when they had gone, Jesus began to speak *concerning John*: by which the Evangelist would assure us, in an undertone, that He had not referred to the Baptist before, especially not in His last saying touching offence. But *why* did He let them first depart, and not utter what follows in their hearing? The Evangelist's observation makes a latent design perceptible, without anticipating, however, the thought of the reflecting reader by any direct

[1] There is no ground whatever for referring this warning to the Baptist himself, and thence to derive a supposed *proof* that he himself had been offended in Jesus.

reflexion of his own. The disciples of John had obtained what they wanted, a decisive answer to the desire of their question, which, if not directly expressed, would be plain enough to their after-meditation. Anything further said for themselves or done in their presence, would have had evil effect. Would it have been fitting that the Lord should endeavour, by detailed and continued explanations, to ripen or hasten the development of the slowly struggling faith of these not insignificant "men" (Lu. ver. 20), upon whom their master had already expended much pains. This would have been far less effectual than the brief message with its piercing point at the close; and would have assumed before the people the unbecoming appearance of exceedingly sedulous anxiety concerning them on His part. Or, was any thing further requisite to be communicated to John? Assuredly not, for both the Angel of Preparation and the Angel of the Covenant understood one another perfectly well, according to a far better plan of common operation than that which, according to the opinion of many fools, they had concerted in the lodges of the Essenes. That which our Lord goes on to say concerning John, it was needless that his disciples should carry to him for his consolation; and its appearance would have been that of adulation to the people. But so much the more necessary was it that the people, in whose minds the great question had excited many thoughts, should have a further testimony and assurance that John was not, as at first sight it might have seemed, in doubt concerning Jesus.[1]

The entire transaction with the Baptist, which at the time caused so great a sensation, had now to a great extent faded away and become old; the Lord, therefore, wisely takes this occasion to bring it back to the people's thoughts, and speaks concerning it in a manner similar to ch. xxi. 24, 25. He commences by giving his due honour to the man who in this inconstant, childish generation had fallen into unhonoured oblivion; and by pointing out the permanent dignity of the prisoner, whom he, however, does not release. He founds upon the testimony of His forerunner, which, without miracles (Jno. x. 41), had

[1] This correct view is found distinctly and expressly maintained in *Chrysostom* (Hom. xxxvii.)

awakened so universal a response, the evidence of His own Messiahship, and of the presence of the kingdom of heaven. The general concourse of the people to the preacher in the wilderness, however little permanent effect resulted from it, was a public confession on which an appeal to them might always afterwards be founded; they had willingly heard the announcement "repent ye," they had for the most part submitted to baptism, and thereby confessed not only that they were sinners, but that they admitted *repentance to be the only way to the kingdom of heaven.* All this they are *reminded* of by the Lord's questions, and by the sharp sayings which recall the scene, and vividly paint it before their memory:—how was it then, when ye flocked to the wilderness? While he thus speaks concerning John, He is in reality speaking also concerning them, and piercing their hearts and consciences.

Vers. 7—9. These words of our Lord belong pre-eminently to those of His discourses which most illustriously exhibit His wisdom in *teaching.* Under a simple and popular expression, the essential meaning of which every one who heard it must have understood, and the strongly marked form of which would cleave to the memory, there is concealed an endless fulness of deep thoughts and of interwoven relations which only by degrees would rise before the thoughtful attention. The *thrice repeated* —What went ye out for to see? is itself a most *emphatic* reference to the impulse which urged them to go forth, and also to what they learned from thus going forth, bringing forcibly to their minds both the one and the other. But that which follows each similar question in progressive development, is arranged with a precise and specific purpose. The discourse proceeds from the *reed* of the wilderness, from the *external scene* thus vividly recalled, to the *man* or the *person* who was to be seen there, and then advancing still further, to the dignity of his personality, as a *prophet.* The great point here to which the rest leads is this—to mark out this man in the wilderness in the well-known, deeply-stamped character of his whole life, first in his constancy in opposition to *men,* then in his self-denying severity against *himself,* and finally, in his high office and calling of *God.* Nor is this enough—a third climax is observable. The *first* question joins issue with the secret thought and expectation

of many that the rigour of this new preacher of repentance would soon relax, and that he would not stand immoveably firm to his first appeal![1] But the *second* question, after the former has shamed their secret suspicion, introduces by the ἀλλά (which thus receives its full force), another application and turn of His challenge. The under tone of the first was—"Is it not true, that such was your first thought, and that it would have well pleased you to find it so?" The second, on the other hand, conversely signifies, "Is it not true, that ye assuredly did *not*, and could not have desired *that*, when ye sought the man in the wilderness, having already heard of his clothing and manner of life!" Finally, the *third* question does not seize their external impression of his personality as they found him, but takes hold of the *conviction*, which the preacher's words had produced in all their minds, that he was a *prophet* (ch. xxi. 26). "*Is it not true*, that ye found in Him a prophet, and were constrained to acknowledge Him as such? But rising above all is the circumstance that the Lord only says they went out to *see* somewhat, using, indeed, first the strong θεάσασθαι (as if they had gone to a spectacle), which is afterwards softened to the more customary ἰδεῖν, while He does not say, though it would have better befitted the going out to a prophet, that they went out ἀκούειν. This is spoken with the same tone in which the Lord had formerly rebuked the superficial, inconstant, and capricious conduct of the people (Jno. v. 35); and prepares the way for the similitude of the sporting, childish children given below. Men should go forth to *hear* a prophet; but this was far from their thoughts: and here lay their great fault, in spite of all their crowding forth, their astonishment, their confession, and their baptism. Again, taking the other side:—they went to *see*, and yet did not rightly *see*: for in a true prophet the prophet is truly to be seen, and in this case the whole manifestation of the life of the preaching pointed to his great message. All these thoughts the Lord's words would excite—how much could He say with His few words! (Jno. vii. 46).

[1] *Roos:* "We shall see how long this new preacher of repentance will carry on his preaching. He will presently become tired of it, will abate his severity, and become again like one of ourselves."

The *reed* shaken with the wind, in the first question, should be understood at once literally and figuratively; for the expression, which is certainly taken from the locality of the wilderness near the Jordan, just before-mentioned, included *both*. Assuredly it was not to see the reeds out in the wilderness that ye went forth—or did ye suppose, did ye wish, to find in the man who was there a compliant, changeable prophet of the people, a man like yourselves, and not a firm and stedfast prophet of God? (Eccles. v. 11). That would have been, in its kind, no better than a mere reed! *No*, though there was the appearance of this, it was, at the same time, another impulse which sent you out, a presentiment of that which you actually saw there and found! This first question is followed by no such responsive antithesis as the others; for the answer is sufficiently understood in itself:—the man in the wilderness stood like an iron pillar, and like a wall of brass against the whole land, against the priests and councillors as well as against the common people (Jer. i. 18)—he adhered immoveably to his first—*Repent ye!* This the people well knew. And this of itself was convincing testimony that this same man could not have been moved by the temptation of persecution to exchange his witnessing—"*This is He*"! for a doubtful, and questioning—"*Art thou He?*" It was not, then, from doubt that he put the question! But that it was not from impatience to be released from prison, what follows goes on to show. He who was so severe against others, was equally rigorous against himself. Ye remember well that as the sedges of the desert were around him, so also that his garment was of camel's hair, with the leathern girdle about his loins: there was no μαλακὰ ἱμάτια,[1] no ἱματισμὸς ἔνδοξος καὶ τρυφή (as St Luke explains). Assuredly ye did not expect a secular forerunner of a Messiah coming in worldly pomp? Such an one would not be sought, would not be found in the *wilderness*: and if the man of the wilderness is now imprisoned by Herod, he did not fall into this imprisonment as a courtier, whose desire was upon

[1] Which phrase appears similarly in Homer. Odyss. ά 437. Iliad. ώ 796, and other Greek authors, *e.g.*, Diodor. Virgil also designates the Serica as molles canes: Plautus. Baach. i. 1, 38, speaks in the same way.

worldly good living (though there he would better fare than upon his locusts), but in consequence of his rigid preaching of repentance to the king. *Behold*, yonder in Herod's court are worldlings and flatterers enough, for king's houses are the place for them :[1] there the rule still holds good, which ordered in the time of Ahasuerus, that none might enter into the king's palace clothed with sackcloth (Esther iv. 2); then cry they to the prophets as they did to Amos:—Prophecy not here, for it is the king's court! (Amos vii. 13). But John has been the Elijah of this Ahab :—The Lord's words thus graze the edge of condemnation upon the thoughtless court of the day, though without letting fall a single expression which might have been capable of an unseemly construction in the minds of the people, as spoken against *the king* himself, for He does not speak in the singular at all. His only care is to obviate the people's offence against the imprisoned John. He only intimates briefly :—such are in king's *houses* well received, but come not into king's prisons : and thus, regarding the Man of the Wilderness and the Man imprisoned as one, and consistent with himself, He paves the way to the third great word—*a prophet!* In this he only gives expression to the truth which was at last admitted by all; but confirms it with His own ναὶ λέγω ὑμῖν; and immediately goes beyond it by His still greater—*more than a prophet!* (περισσότερον is here, as always in the New Testament, neuter, and thus corresponds with the threefold τί). This was something new and unexpected, a text which instantly required further illustration. The people might immediately, if the Lord had paused here, have hurried His words to the conclusion—Is he then the Messiah himself? And yet has he sent to ask thee, and challenged thee as the Messiah? What dost thou say, and *which is it* of the two? For what is there between Prophet and Messiah? But the Lord leaves no space for their foolish imaginings, but immediately adds His own impressive solution of the mystery :—*For* he is, what he himself testified in his question of deep meaning, the Forerunner who *prepares the way* for the Messiah!

[1] There is no evil in his wearing the costly garments, who is born for and called to the court. Comp. Hamann i. 324, and iii. 75.

[2] We cannot understand how this should intimate, according to *Schleiermacher*, that John was not yet in prison.

Ver 10. As such he is *περισσότερον προφήτου* in a twofold respect, according to external designation in the Scripture, and internal relation of His office, the one corresponding to the other. It is his pre-eminence among the Prophets, that *it is written* by them *concerning him*, so that he is also consequently an *ἐρχόμενος*, one who was to come. John had with his uniform humility included himself in the expectant "we," and by speaking of looking for *another*, if Jesus were not He, had once more said—*I* am not. He had formerly chosen that one of the two passages which predict his coming, in which the humble and unpretending character of *the voice* is given to him, not that of a prophet or a servant sent of God. The Lord now graciously rewards him for this by placing Himself on a level with him (afterwards vers. 18, 19), as sent like himself, and by giving prominence to the other passage which calls him the *angel* or *messenger* of God. Ὁ *ἐρχόμενος* was the general expression for the Messiah, derived from many such places as Ps. cxviii. 26, xl. 8; Hab. ii. 3, &c.; but the fundamental passage which at the close of all prophecy, brings into prominence and finally seals this appellation, is Mal. iii. 1.[1] The Baptist could not but have thought of this Scripture when he framed his question, and therefore our Lord emphatically shows that John is there exhibited, with Himself and before Himself, as also a מַלְאָךְ, and in the very place where the מַלְאַךְ הַבְּרִית is spoken of; and thus He gives him back the *οὗτός ἐστι*, which the servant had formerly ministered to his Lord. But as it refers to Himself, the prophecy in the Lord's lips is curtailed, and its full meaning concealed. He speaks in precisely such a manner, as to utter the consciousness with which He beholds Himself in this Scripture, while, at the same time, His humility as the Son of Man is involuntarily and undesignedly exhibited:—He so changes the text that instead of the Hebrew and Sept. reading לְפָנַי, *πρὸ προσώπου μου*, standing alone, it is thrice said *πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὁδόν σου, ἔμπροσθέν σου*.[2] The *Lord* who speaks by the Prophets, in Malachi announces *Himself* as the coming angel of the covenant: *my* messenger shall prepare

[1] Compare *Hengstenberg's* Christology on Malachi.

[2] The perfect harmony of the two Evangelists, in a citation so strikingly deviating, is very remarkable.

the way before *me* (comp. Lu. i. 16, 17, to go before the Lord their God, and also ver. 76); but *this* the Lord who is come as the Son of Man may not as yet openly declare, it is enough that by the threefold σοῦ He signifies that He is marked out and referred to by the Father. See how, without directly uttering it, He nevertheless announces His ἐγώ εἰμι in His sublime humility! And note how that necessary humility by which He exalts the Baptist to the highest point of honour, by placing him on a level with Himself, becomes the loftiest testimony to His own dignity: for that greatest thing, which makes John more than a Prophet, consists in nothing but this—"because he is My Forerunner!"

And that is the internal relation of his office, for the sake of which the Scripture pointed him out, and wrote beforehand concerning Him. The Prophets prophesied *from afar* (ver. 13), but this man announces the instant coming of Him who was already born, testifies of Him who was already in their midst, points with his finger to the Messiah as He walks, stands as the friend of the Bridegroom by the Bridegroom's side. (Jno. iii. 29). He *prepares His way*—that is the substance in common of both passages, which were written concerning him. In uttering *this* finally, our Lord gave the key to the preceding words concerning the preaching to the poor, and the offence taken against Himself, and similarly paved the way for what subsequently follows concerning the unbelief of the present generation. Repentence! repentance! that is the preparation of the Lord's way, and the way of His kingdom, as the voice in the wilderness testified loudly enough to all consciences. They only who through *repentance* had become poor, take no offence against the Gospel. This great word which recurs to the mind continually in this discourse concerning the *Preacher of Repentance*, finally appears in ver. 21, as the point of final decision between God and men. Let it be further noted in connexion with the next verse that if John, the *Preacher of Repentance* κατ' ἐξοχήν, understood the whole relations of his preaching more fully and profoundly than all others before him, so also he could not have been, in the knowledge of the *humble* Messiah, who proceeded to spiritual victory through the path of suffering and self-renunciation, less than some of them, for example, Isaiah!

Ver. 11. "The Baptist" was a cognomen which John had soon received among the people and his disciples, from the striking and hitherto unheard of character of his public function. Probably at first a name of reproach or blame on account of his presumption (Jno.i. 25), it had passed into a general descriptive appellation, and among his own disciples (Lu. vii. 20), was used as a title of honour, since their Master had included his whole mission under that term (Jno. i. 33). The three first Evangelists give him this name: but here the Lord's own mouth confirms twice in succession, this *title of honour* as the highest and best designation of this man's dignity and position. He does not say,—the Preacher of Repentance; for this would not have distinguished him from other prophets, and the Lord would leave that to speak for itself in the consciences of the people, till, in ver. 21, He plainly utters it Himself. The *baptism* of John, that to which the people submitted, involved the general confession of the people, which was forced from them by the divine authority (Matt. xxi. 25) of this Forerunner; and thus they justified God. Lu. vii. 29. Concerning this Baptist, the Lord now utters the impressive word, confirming it by the single *Ἀμήν* in the midst of this discourse (stronger than the *ναί* ver. 9, afterwards vers. 22—24 only *πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν*);—among them that are born of women (earthly, mortal men, like יְלוּד אִשָּׁה Job. xiv. 1, xv. 14), there hath not risen *a greater than he*, none greater hath been especially raised up, sent and commissioned of God.[1] *Ἐγείρεσθαι* used by the Prophets, (Lu. vii. 16, Jno. vii. 52), hence also of Jesus Himself Acts v. 30 (as also per catachresin of false prophets Matt. xxiv. 11—24), as itself closely connected with being born, (Matt. iii. 9) inasmuch as God provides and appoints His servants from their mother's womb, summons and sends them forth whensoever he will, already qualified by nature according to His predetermined purpose. In this הֵקִים according to Old Test. language, both the human birth and the divine ordination, are included. Among all those who were born of women and called by God to their office and its function, there had been

[1] Let the progression of the whole discourse referring to him be well observed—a man—a prophet—the greatest!

none greater than the *Baptist*, whose difference from all his predecessors is by that one word defined. He is not simply regarded as the greatest among them, but as standing alone. We shall hear presently in ver. xii. 13, how that "his days" are already the introduction of a new period, and that he stands opposed to the law and the Prophets, being beyond their circle. And yet even this high elevation of John is only a transition, in this discourse which rises from greater to yet greater things, to that final and highest utterance: *notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he!* Not so much for John's own sake has all this been said, but for the sake of the testimony to the kingdom of heaven now come. Not that the people were to attach themselves to John as his disciples, when they could no longer go forth to him, because the Lord had called him from his work; but that they should come to Him, whose way the Baptist had prepared.

And is He then, is Christ Himself, the μικρότερος, who in regard to the Baptist is yet more externally humble and unreputed than he; who coming after him is yet preferred before him; and in his existence from the beginning is in a superabundant sense μείζων αὐτοῦ? The words were thus understood by such Fathers as *Chrysostom* and *Augustin*, and by old expositors as *Euthymius* and *Theophylact*. *Menken* also has lately undertaken to support this view, with ingenious and specious arguments. But however this might seem to suit ver. 6 at the first glance, a deeper penetration shows that it does not in reality; and a thorough and full exposition overturns it altogether.

First, let it be observed that the comparative may not be thus immediately and absolutely taken for the superlative; and this of itself undermines all those views, which (after *Luther's* text), elsewhere rightly enough, but inappropriately here, speak of Christ as having humbled Himself to the uttermost. Thus understood, the comparative must, in any case, have immediately referred to John; and it cannot be regarded as strictly correct, that Jesus was inferior among the people to John, who had now declined, or had been so when John was the centre of the people's concourse (for see Jno. iii. 26; Matt. iv. 25, viii. 27, ix. 26; Lu. v. 1, vii. 16, 17). Further, it will commend itself to all right feeling, as quite dissonant from the whole spirit and tone of

this discourse, that the Lord should now throw off the veil of humility which He had assumed from the beginning, and suddenly break forth with the open declaration—*Verily, I say unto you*, I am nevertheless greater than He! The less can He be supposed to say this, as this and more than this is self-understood in the sacred dignity which pervades the whole discourse. Again, it is not an external manifestation and repute among the people which is spoken of in ver. 11;—neither as it regards the Baptist nor the μικρότερος, for it immediately follows—*in the kingdom of heaven!* Thus it is an actual position and estimation before God in that kingdom, or in relation to it, which is referred to. We have it significantly in St Luke—μείζων προφήτης οὐδείς ἐστιν, and John is thereby not simply placed in the rank of the Prophets, but before them and above them: consequently, that which is placed in contradistinction and superiority to *him*, must indicate an altogether new, and yet higher, degree and dignity. It is not the Lord's design to decide whether John is greater, in his own proper personality, in his nearness of communion with God, in the degree of his holiness, than Abraham, or Moses, or David: He only assigns to him a peculiar and pre-eminent rank as it respects his office[1] as Baptist, and Forerunner of Him who was to come. (He does not say directly—John is greater than all these; but merely—no one among them is greater than he—not expressly:—no one is equal to him). As the "greater" in the former part, being a proper comparative pre-supposes the less, just so the distinctly contrasted ὁ δὲ μικρότερος implies the greater with respect to itself, and that in the kingdom of heaven. It is decisive, finally, upon this point that Jesus as its King could never speak of Himself (no parallel can be found of the kind), as being *in* the kingdom of heaven, even the *greatest* in it—just as a king might be termed the highest in the state. He is not in the kingdom, He comes not into that kingdom; but the kingdom itself comes in, and with, Himself. We have examples of the

[1] Thus much, in any case, must be supplied after μείζων in St Matthew, if not just προφήτης in the strict sense, since in the New Testament there are no more prophets, properly speaking. The discourse here runs upon official position and corresponding degree of knowledge: it is *that* which is meant by προφήτης in St Luke, which addition, therefore, is not incorrect.

Lord's use of the expressions concerning the greater and the less in the kingdom of heaven, in the plain parallels of Matt. v. 19, x. 42, with which the question of the disciples, and this answer in ch. xviii. 1, 4 will harmonize. Consequently, ὁ μικρότερος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ does not signify him that is externally and apparently less in regard to the ancient prophets or the Baptist; but, according to its obvious and literal sense, *him that is less* in comparison with others greater by his side in the kingdom of heaven. Then comes in the natural significance of the article, making the comparative equivalent to a superlative:—he that is less than *all* others connected with him, must, consequently, be the least. As we might say—which is *he who is the wiser* (than all others) in this room? But the emphasis falls sharply upon the contrast of the two comparatives: the *less* and the least *in* the kingdom, is yet *greater* than all who are without, even greater than he, who among those *without* has no *superior*.

And thus we find the simple and important ground-thought of the whole saying, in the emphatic ἐν; in the contrast between the within and the without. Now, but also now first, is *the kingdom of heaven* come, present, and thrown open to the entrance of all, (ver. 12). There are then two ranks:—all the Prophets raised up by God, and John at the last immediately before and at the introduction of this kingdom,—but now also the disciples of Christ, who are the first *within* this kingdom, its actual subjects and citizens upon earth. Here comes in a new birth above the being "born of women" (John iii.), here is that better thing provided for us (Heb. xi. 40), here do the disciples of Christ *see*, and *hear*, and *possess* all that which so many Prophets and righteous men were obliged to *wait* for (Matt xiii. 16, 17), that which John himself, who dies in prison without becoming His disciple to Whom he sent all men, received not upon earth. Let the remarkable passage in Zech. xii. 8 be compared, to which we may almost suppose the Lord was referring. It was the high prerogative of Moses to hear the Lord's words mouth to mouth, and not in dark speeches, and to behold His similitude (Num xii. 6—8); but now every disciple in this respect is already as Moses the greatest of the Prophets (Matt. xiii. 11; Mar. iv. 11). He hears and sees, however, in addition, much greater things than ever Moses did. A Christian scholar and catechumen, who has in childlike sim-

plicity learned his Our Father, knows and enjoys more than the whole Old Testament could give; and so far stands nearer to God than even John the Baptist, whose position was the threshold between the Old and New Testaments, standing at the door without himself entering in. This holds good, however, not *merely* of "knowledge" (*von Gerlach*), but of the whole position as before God, of the possession of the better things of grace, even though in connection with little knowledge. For the *having* and *being* is here the true knowledge.

Ver. 12. By this, which is the only correct exposition of the preceding verse we have laid the foundation for a thorough comprehension of that which follows. The *kingdom of heaven*—this is still in continuation the fundamental idea, that is, the kingdom of heaven as come, and among them. It is not *Doctrine* only that the Lord brings and offers to His hearers, but a new, long-promised, long-prepared, *now* first established institution. A new condition of things begins with this, the *Kingdom of Heaven* is *come upon earth!* This is the meaning of the great *now*, ἄρτι, νυνὶ δέ, which He cries from this time forward. It began, properly speaking, with *His own* days, the days of the Son of Man (Lu. xvii. 22); yet He reckons, in His gracious lowliness, *the days of John the Baptist* as included in them, between the ἀπό and the ἕως. These days are of course the whole period of his official activity, which being now drawing to its close in his imprisonment, might be spoken of as concluded. It may, however, be asked, whether the Lord reckons the ἀπό from the beginning or from the end of this period. But when it is considered that the Baptist appeared to Israel not very long before the Lord Himself, and that for a certain space their testimonies ran together, and that the Forerunner was distinguished from all the other Prophets as *coming* to *Him who was to come*, and belonging to Him, we cannot hesitate longer to include the Baptist's term in the great new age. It is the *prelude* to the *opening* of the kingdom, the actual beginning of the immediately following *now*, and John's announcement of the kingdom of heaven as *nigh at hand* was already an invitation which the Lord Himself, and by His disciples, only took up and continued.

The Lord goes on to say, that in this great era now opened, the kingdom of heaven βιάζεται—and what is that? Ver-

bally, it is uncertain, whether it is in the passive or middle voice, and in what signification it is used. First of all, *βιάζειν* or more commonly *βιάζεσθαι* means to use violence upon a person or thing, to overmaster, constrain, do violence to; hence also, to pursue anything with the greatest earnestness and zeal (Ælian. H. V. xiii. 32. Joseph. Ant vii. 9, 2, Philo Cherub. p. 127 c.). In the passive voice,[1] the meaning here might be, as Luther gives it, and either in a good or bad sense:—the kingdom of heaven is outraged and opposed, or, they *strive* and use violence to *enter into it*. But then *βιάζεσθαι* in the middle voice signifies to do anything with *vehemence, to use violence*, in the accomplishment of anything, as Lu. xvi. 16. (Hence *βιαζόμενος* or *βιασάμενος* is connected with the verb as an adverb—powerfully). Let us now compare, for the first time, the parallel in Lu. xvi. 16, where the word is commonly received in the good sense, (*εἰς αὐτὴν βιάζεται*, equivalent to *βιαζόμενος ἁρπάζει*, that is, breaks into it, may press in unhindered, as the counterpart to Ex. xix. 24 Sept. which *Grotius* refers to), and *there* it must indicate an *unfriendly violence against* the kingdom of heaven. For, first of all, the *πᾶς* in that passage can only thus be properly explained. The language of John iii. 26, that all men came to Him, might indeed be the unmeasured words of the envious, but the Lord Himself could not possibly have said that —*every man* presses with violence into the kingdom of heaven,[2] which would ill accord with the lamentation over the prevalent universal unbelief which St Matthew records. Further, that that interpretation would contradict the whole connection of St Luke's discourses from ch. xiv.—ch. xviii. We shall at that place show in detail, but now must take it for granted, that the sayings recorded there were not unskilfully gathered together from a variety of occasions, but were actually connected together by the Lord Himself, introducing designed repetitions with new meanings and connexions. The parables of Lu. xv., xvi. form a complete whole, to which the intermediate and interposed words

1 The preference of which *Schweizer* Stud. u. Krit. 1836. 1, has maintained.

2 To qualify it (as *Bengel* does) with the addition—*πᾶς βιαζομενος*—every one of the few who seek to enter, attains it only by violence—is in the highest degree forced.

strictly belong. The sinner's repentance or punishment, how he is either gained or is lost, is spoken of first in parables addressed to penitent sinners and self-righteous Pharisees. In the third parable, and at the end of the first three, the love of God in seeking the sinner is exhibited as yet bearing with the eldest son: then does the householder set before the new and unconfirmed disciples the prudence of the sinner, to save him from the danger which threatens him even after his conversion, by a lesson of fidelity in earthly and heavenly good: the last parable, finally, exhibits the punishments which all accrue, when the sinner, like the Pharisees, in proud, *practical unbelief in God's revelation*, has despised the love of God which seeks him and calls him to *repentance*;—and this last the Lord introduces by some preparatory words to the mocking Pharisees! Ye self-righteous ones are all the worse sinners before God (ver. 15), for ye despise the revelation of the divine love! Law, Prophecy, Gospel are all before you, *but* ye receive nothing aright, ye rage, and blaspheme *against* the kingdom of God which is preached to you, because ye have for your lusts (ver. 18) weakened and set aside that law (ver. 17) which the kingdom does not abolish but establish. With regard *to you* it may be said:—all men outrage and oppose that kingdom, instead of meekly hearing and accepting it. Certainly, even if this deeper connexion is not admitted, the *but* which in ver. 17 follows the πᾶς, decisively shews that ver. 16 can only be designed to blame the conduct of the Pharisees. Consequently St Luke's meaning is like St Matthew's in ch. xxiii. 13;—compare ver. 12 in the latter with ver. 15 in the former.

But hastily to conclude that the βιάζεται here in St Matthew must *consequently* have the same bad sense,—that the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth the violence of opposition, and is mightily repelled, would be to set out with the false supposition, that the two places must necessarily use the expression in one and the same meaning. When our Lord repeats His earlier utterances in another connection, it is rather His wont to apply them in a different way, to exhibit another aspect of their comprehensive and many-sided meaning. And one of those pregnant and *profound* sayings we have here in this βιάζεσθαι. In St Matthew the Lord proceeds immediately afterwards to speak of the *believ-*

ing acceptance of the convincing and public testimony then extant concerning the kingdom of heaven then present; but the one-sided reference to the violent resistance to that kingdom would have been an irrelevant introduction to that topic, would rather have diverted the thought from it. The view which *Luther* takes, and which has predominated in the interpretation of the church; viz., that men struggle to enter into the kingdom of heaven (as Luke xiii. 24, and they who use violence obtain it and take it by force) (Hesych. *βιάζεται, βιάιως κρατεῖται*), suits the connexion to a very great extent, better indeed than the former, *but not altogether*. The essential and fundamental thought, which pervades the whole passage, vers. 10—15, is the mighty and convincing witness which the kingdom of heaven bears to itself, and not the resulting faith or unbelief, which first begins to be spoken of in ver. 16. Further, we must regard the *first* member—*ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανων βιάζεται*, as referring to something pertaining to the *kingdom of heaven* now published, *in itself;* otherwise the second member would be only a tautological repetition, which would be utterly out of keeping with the pregnant, pointed brevity of these striking and new announcements. The Lord is speaking of the great and assured *fact* that the kingdom of heaven has come, that it openly proclaims and offers itself (ver. 15); and it is this which He places in opposition to the prophecying of the Prophets, and the preparation of Elias. St Luke—*εὐαγγελίζεται*:—it is preached as joyful tidings, by deed, and word, and all the signs of this great crisis! *This* is the proper parallel of the first *βιάζεται in this place:* this is the central, all-comprehending, and fundamental idea, which would be without its corresponding expression, if that is not found in the *βιάζεται*. And what, then, is its full meaning? The word signifies here no more and no less than its active sense which passes into the middle:—the kingdom of heaven proclaims itself *loudly and openly, breaking in with violence;* the poor are compelled (Lu. xiv. 23) to enter in; those who oppose it are constrained *to take offence.* In short, *all things proceed urgently with it*, it goes with "mighty movement and impulse" (as Drüseke preaches), it works effectually upon all spirits in both directions and on all sides. *Bengel* says well, though somewhat onesidedly, *sese vi quasi*

obtrudit—for the βιάζεσθαι embraces as well the drawing as the repulsion of men's minds; both are at once its one, mighty working.[1]

It may be hoped that the first member of the paragraph is now made sufficiently clear by lexicon, parallels, and context, and the second now remains to be investigated, καὶ βιασταὶ ἁρπάζουσιν αὐτήν. It is immediately evident that the βιασταί are not robbers by violence (perverse expositors have actually thought that such, converted from their former life, are intended, for what do we not find in exegesis?); but βιαστής has its usual Greek force, one who shows and uses his own strength, one who applies violence to anything, consequently in the obvious transition of the continuous discourse, it is strictly equivalent to βιασάμενοι.[2] Are we then, *now* at least, to translate with *Luther* in a good sense? But the ἁρπάζειν for *cupide et violenter arripere* only in a praiseworthy and commanded sense, will not altogether harmonise; in that case we might have expected the more precise and distinguishing ὁι βιάσται; and the parallel in St Luke εἰς αὐτὴν βιάζεσθαι altogether fails to accord with this ἁρπάζειν. It is our opinion, in consequence, as the two *vocabula* so entirely correspond, that βιασταί must have the same full and double meaning as βιάζεται, as indeed is indicated by the absence of the article, which leaves it indefinite. In a case where exegesis perseveringly disputes which of the two views of a passage capable of two senses is correct, it is *generally* found that both are in a third meaning one, and that the disputants in both cases have both right and wrong in their argument. Our view does not necessitate any tautology in the two sentences. The first speaks of that mighty excitement which the breaking in of the *kingdom of heaven in itself occasions*; the second *points out inferentially* (and this is the tendency of the whole discourse) the *result* as seen flowing from this cause in the present age, and thus constituting *signs* of the time. The kingdom of heaven breaks in upon the age with power; and what this signifies with regard to its

[1] *Von Gerlach's* expression—"it spreads itself abroad with power," adheres rather too much to the one side.

[2] As no *article* is prefixed, the two personalities of Jesus and John cannot (as *Lange* thinks) be intended, as if, by their means, the kingdom of heaven was "violently brought to light."

first, and proper introduction, we find continually repeated in narrower circles, as it approaches a land, a town, or a house, and begins to *spread its fame.* Its constraining power does violence to all: but it excites, at the same time, in the case of many, obstinate opposition. He who will not submit to it, must be offended and resist; and he too who yields to it, must press and struggle through this offence. Thus the kingdom of heaven *does* and *suffers* violence, *both* in its twofold influence: it exerts a mighty power itself, and a mighty power must be put forth towards it, whether it be of faith or of unbelief, for its testimony produces an instant separation between these two. When the *preaching of repentance* has preceded, and the Lord Himself has come after, then is the critical time for such βιάζεσθαι, as is seen in the βιασταῖς for and against. Then men begin to *contend about it,* and no man can keep aloof from this general movement. This contention and strife, ἁρπάζειν ἀντήν is consequently in both directions, for and against: it is the common expression of the enmity of unbelief and the struggle of faith together; and in Lu. xvi. the Lord takes only one of the sides for his immediate object. The best translation into German is—the kingdom of heaven *braucht Gewalt,* rises and requires force, and those who use force *seize upon it;* and the intermediate struggle between unbelief and faith, the false ἁρπάζειν of the Messiah, Jno. vi. 15 (as if His kingdom was to be thus ἁρπάγδην set up), is also included. If this twofold meaning (which is explained by a reference to Matt. x. 21 and 35) is not quite clear to us, we must finally consider, that not only do both exhibit themselves in facts connected, but that they necessarily in their mutual influence occasion one another:—when some would enter, others oppose them; and when those oppose, the former struggle all the more vehmently against them. *Bengel,* in order to maintain the exclusively good sense of ἁρπάζειν (in *Neander* "to struggle for it with all the soul"), says that the lamentation over unbelief and opposition only begins with ver. 16; but this is not true, inasmuch as the whole discourse in its two aspects as exhibited in the paragraphs beginning with vers. 20 and 25, is *prepared for* and given in germ, not only in ver. 6, but also in ver. 12. *Nitzsch* (System § 142) will not be prevented by *Schweizer* from finding in this passage a commendable violence put forth, and we

perfectly agree with him, concurring also in his position, drawn from the depth of our Lord's discourse, that "the seizing with violence, of which the Lord speaks (Matt. xi. 12), presupposes the *days of John and of Christ*, or their *calling*" (we would rather have said—their drawing and seizing men, their *doing violence*), and that thus nothing Pelagian is to be attributed to the proper power of man. But if he discerns in the βιάζεσθαι and ἁρπάζειν only this one meaning, actively and passively opposed, only the kingdom of heaven suffering violence from those who seize upon it violently,[1] we must demur, and assert that the Lord signifies *also* the excitement which it creates, as seen in the opposition, and that in the βιάζεσθαι of the kingdom of heaven there is first of all an *active* sense of *its* coming and influence, even that which *Nitzsch* is obliged to *presuppose* in the call of the days of John and of Christ.

Vers. 13—15. John has been from vers. 9 more and more expressly designated as standing alone in his relation, now he is most decisively so: he is not included among "all the Prophets." They *have* prophecied, continuing to do so after their death in their Scriptures; their prophecy came to an end, first of all, with Malachi, until Zacharias the father of John, and Simeon spake the last prophecies, of which the last of all, Simeon's word, already passed over into an announcement of Him who was come. Thus, *until John*, that is, looking at the time (as before ἕως ἄρτι), until *the days of the Baptist*. But also, looking at the substance of their prophecies, until this point of boundary between time past and the after time, between prophecy and fulfilment, between the Old and the New Testaments: for the messenger who prepares the way, the Elias in Malachi's last words at the end of the Old Testament, is actually its winding up and transition to the New, the preaching of repentance in order to the kingdom of heaven is the internal unity of the law and the Prophets, inasmuch as both foreannounce the future time and Him who was to come. Hence, Mal. iv. 4 comprehends all in the one word—*remember ye the law of Moses!* We have shown at length on Matt. v. 17, in what sense the *law*, as well

[1] As *von Meyer*, also, wrote to me: "I prefer decidedly the passive and good sense."

as the prophets, *prophecies;* in St Luke the law precedes, according to common usage, but here it follows, partly because the sentence passes on from speaking of the Prophets, partly for the sake of giving emphasis to this point—and *also* the law! The man who stood on the threshold between the two economies represents both: as the preparer of the way for the Messiah he is on a level with all the Prophets (to whom in a certain sense Isa. xl. 3 already applied), and yet as the distinctively last preparer of the way who was to come, he is himself the beginning of the New Testament, of the new time of the laws' fulfilment. Mar. i. 1—2. Ver. 14, as the fullest conclusion of all that had been said, signifies this; and gives its most significant explanation by means of *and*, which is here equivalent to *for*. But the open declaration, that John is himself actually (*αὐτός*) the Elias prophecied in Malachi, is again mysteriously[1] limited by the formula—*εἰ θέλετε δέξασθαι*, that is, if ye will receive it and understand it as it was intended, if ye will receive him, as ye should, temporarily as such. That is until in a second later fulfilment the actual Elias shall come. For our Lord will no more contradict John's negative (Jno. i. 21), than His own declaration Matt. xvii. 11—12, where He himself testifies both that Elias *will come*, and that in the person of John he has *already come* once. The definite article in Malachi, אֵת אֵלִיָּה הַנָּבִיא, must indicate the actual, historical person of the Tishbite, and the Jewish expectation expressed in Ecclus. xlviii. 10, has its foundation in truth. This the Lord designedly leaves open, by not only saying *Ἠλίας* without the article, but also by pointing in *ὁ μέλλων ἐρχεσθαι* to a yet future, and proper coming of Elias.[2] *Αὐτός ἐστιν* is less than *οὗτός ἐστι*, ver. 10. Thus much only will He say, that in the person of John "The Elias *to come*," exhibited himself *for this time*: and He thereby uttered the last word on this subject that was to be uttered, for Elias and the

[1] With an intimation which did not, as was formerly thought, contain an accommodation to Jewish expectation and mode of speech, but involved something quite different.

[2] Our Lord was far from intending to say—ye shall expect no other Messiah! (As according to *Bengel's* interpretation *μέλλων* is spoken simply *tanquam e prospectu Veteris Testamenti in novum*—to which. *Alford* correctly opposes Matt. xvii. 11).

Messiah pertain to one another, as the mockers under the cross (ch. xxvii. 47) also knew. The question had not expressed itself openly, *σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός*; and the answer does not openly express that which was to be yet veiled from the people on account of the carnal expectations which hung around it, but it went far enough to enable every understanding hearer to think the rest, and to hear, as if it had been spoken, *καὶ ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ χριστός*. Then does the word break off, saying all by saying nothing, and by expressive silence crying aloud the truth—he that hath ears to hear, let him hear! This formula, in common use among the Jews, and which often recurs in the Apocalypse, does not challenge to *obedience*, as many, reaching too far, would interpret it—*qui intelligit, obediat*;—but at this point only *qui audit, intelligat!* Enough is given for faith to hear, and yet something remains over for personal, voluntary hearing, understanding, and accepting; for the spiritually deaf cannot be made true hearers by any operation of power from without. All the mightily enforcing testimony of the kingdom of heaven leaves yet room enough for that wonderful *coguntur volentes*, which applies to the relation between God and man, and which was previously expressed in *εἰ θέλετε*. "The kingdom of heaven is matter of conviction; conviction is matter of conscience; conscience is matter of freedom" (Drüseke).

Between this first pause in the discourse, which ver. 11 in St Matthew defines, and the complaint and reproof which then begins in impressive contrast—*but* the men of this generation *will neither* receive the Elias *nor* the Messiah, have ears to hear but hear not—St Luke interposes a paragraph which is not recorded as spoken by Jesus Himself.[1] The *εἶπε δὲ ὁ κύριος* is at least a correct gloss, if not the genuine reading, in order to indicate the end or the parenthesis inserted by St Luke. It is his purpose to explain, for Gentile readers especially, the name *Βαπτιστής*, and the relations of the whole subject to which the Lord's discourse is directed. He places the Pharisees and Scribes in opposition

[1] Although *Grotius*, *de Wette*, *Meyer*, for example, unnaturally maintain this.

to all the people and the Publicans, or the multitudes and the private man.[1] This was the report of St Luke in his third chapter, and does not contradict the other report (Matt. iii. 7), which does not say that the Pharisees were actually baptized, but the contrary—compare ver. 6. The mere coming to his baptism such as that of the Pharisees, John did not accept: that they proudly and hypocritically came, and yet did *not* truly come, was their rejecting of the counsel of God, and their sin; on the other hand, the common people's hearing and justifying God was good in itself, a confession which all the more surely came from their conscience, as the Preacher of Repentance had without any preparation, and contrary to all expectation, commenced his severe and stern announcement of the kingdom of heaven. *Notwithstanding*, if this *vox populi* as *vox Dei*, made the unbelief of the Pharisees all the more blameable, it only served, as it regards the people themselves, who did not persevere, but after their first submission abandoned John again and believed not in Christ, to condemn them by their own acts, as a foolish generation, in earnest about nothing.

Vers. 16, 17. What kind of men are these, what kind of a generation is this? To go out into the wilderness, to hear, to justify God, to be baptized with the baptism of repentance—and not to repent! To be baptized with the baptism of repentance for the *remission of sins*, which the gracious Son of Man immediately comes and preaches to all the poor as His gospel, to flock around Him, to behold His miracles, to hear His words—and then to be offended in Him because he is not a Messiah after their mind, and preaches not a kingdom of heaven *without* the condition of repentance! Is there any thing like this by which it may be understood, with which it may be compared? Thus, as it were in His astonishment, the Lord uses the Rabbinical formula of which the first traces had already been found in the Old Testament, Sam. ii. 13, (Ecclus. xxv. 15; Gr. ver. 11)—*Τίνι δὲ ὁμοιώσω*, as we find it also in Mar. iv. 30; Lu. xiii. 18—20; with an echo of it in Matt. vii. 24, and elsewhere. In St Luke it follows, and what *are* they like? for the Lord will only use a comparison which is strictly according to truth, and in His mouth what the Rabbins say has its full and perfect meaning, לְמָה אֲדַמֶּה

[1] Ἀκούσας of course refers to the people, which once heard *him*, the Baptist.

or לְמָה דּוּמֶה. And what is the answer in the following similitude? Strictly only this—they are like themselves, a *γενεὰ αὕτη*, alone in their kind! But if they are spoken of in the gentlest terms, the similitude of the folly of their own children, when perverse and fickle, would suit them, though far from meeting the case in its *deep reality:* when the old exhibit the childishness of children, it becomes something far more than mere childishness! It cannot but be noted, further, that the Lord, *nihil humani a se aleinum putans*, as He took notice of the rending of the mended garments, (Matt. ix. 16), and the domestic concerns of the children in their bed (Lu. xi. 7), so also observed the children's play in the market-place, and finds in every thing the material for the analogies of His wise teaching. As the play of the children represented the actions of their elders (here counterfeiting wedding and funeral, the merry music and the dirge after their manner), the Lord contemplates in it an instructive and real pattern and likeness of human nature: as we might often say, looking thoughtfully at the doings of the *children*—Even such are *men!*

The universal reference to the dispositions of men generally St Luke retains in the *ἀνθρώπους*, but the more specific reference to which St Matthew adheres in the *γενεὰν τάυτην*, was to the generation living in that then extant and most important age. To this generation both John and Jesus belonged as having come to it and been born in it, and this so far justifies the simile, in which the complaining children must signify them, whose severe or gentle preaching was displeasing to the residue of the age. It has been endeavoured, though without any foundation and with no result, to explain away this most striking application. *Olshausen* understands by both classes of children, those who make advances and those who reject them, the capricious contemporaries of Jesus, and will have the meaning to be, that *the one-half* of this generation desires this, *the other* that, and thus no concerted influence can be brought to bear *among them*, for they are like a band of peevish children: but this is in direct contradiction to the explanation immediately and suitably given in vers. 18, 19. *Lange*[1] would reconcile the explanation with

[1] In the Biblischen Dichtungen (Scriptural Poems) which generally give such admirable exegesis, more, indeed, than many a commentary; but on this occasion the point is not hit.

the simile by an *inversion* of the relation; as the one set of children requires from the other dancing or lamenting, according to the tune, so *does this generation desire that their Prophets* should direct their voice according to its caprice; but this is foreign to the simplicity of a popular similitude, and explains away the deep meaning of this simile, which is uninverted by the Lord Himself in His application. To compare the preaching of God to the world with the play proffered by children to children, and thus to place the two personages who had come to it in the very midst of their generation, is a profound exhibition of their lowliness and condescension, and is in perfect accordance with the actual fact. Was it not thus with them both? Did they not stand thus as men among men, each in His own way condescending to the age, to its need and its desire? It was, indeed, with full *publicity* that they proclaimed their offers, ἐν ἀγοραῖς that is in the streets and broad ways (Cant. iii. 2, Sept. for שְׁוָקִים, instead of which a various reading derived from St Luke has in St Matthew also ἐν ἀγορᾷ in the market-place. The fundamental idea that first strikes us must be this:—Play, foolish child's play without earnestness or perseverance, is the characteristic of the spirit and doings of this age. But there follows immediately a second thought:—He who has come from God to this age, a man among men, comes into their midst and offers them a most solemn and earnest play. Then finally comes the complaining conclusion:—He is, alas, only regarded and treated as having invited to mere pastime, and on that account He is not understood, and therefore is rejected. For it is implied in the background that they cannot but observe that *this* dancing or weeping is something different from, more earnest and real than, *their* play: therefore they are *not pleased* with it now, though otherwise pleased with so much in Him. The children who invite, and play to the others, are not, when we narrowly investigate it, designated as the foolish and self-contradictory ones:[1] but the *blame* falls upon the others, who in both instances are displeased, to whom nothing is right, not even their own just

[1] As *Lange* (Leben Jesu ii. 2 761) has said in opposition to me. They are not, by any means the *same individual children* in the application, but by the "children" generally first the former, then the latter proposal, is rejected.

explained self-will. We must adhere to the plain explanation which the Lord Himself gives in vers. 18, 19; and must not be diverted by the turn of the language, which less logically than picturesquely, includes all in one—this generation is "like unto children"—for this is only designed to say in general, as we often find in the other parables:—it so proceeds with this generation, that this is the effect produced.

Piping and mourning, graciously to invite to joy and to peace, or rebukingly to command repentance: these are the two alternating and blending key-notes of all God's preaching to man;—the preaching of the Gospel, and the preaching of the law. The preaching of the law reached its most rigorous conclusion in John, the Gospel began to sound forth its richest grace from the lips of Jesus. But both these methods approve their perfect *accordance*, in these two, whom the wisdom of God sent in succession yet together, into an age of crisis and decision. The Baptist baptized unto the forgiveness of sins, proclaimed the kingdom of heaven, and spoke of the Bridegroom: Jesus, on the other hand, refrained not from crying, at the beginning, through the process, and at the close of His ministry, Repent ye! and denounced His woes upon the same generation of vipers, which had heard the same denunciations from John. The unison of the two preachings is ever this, *through repentance into the kingdom of heaven!* But this internal unity of the law and the Gospel the world understands not, and therefore rejects both. *We* have piped and mourned unto you, according to one concerted plan—thus properly speaking, they cry together: and to this juxtaposition with John the Lord again condescends, when He proceeds with the ἦλθε, used alike in both cases. But why, finally, does not the mourning stand first, as the preaching of repentance had taken precedence? Because the offer of the *kingdom of heaven* has been from the beginning the joyful ground-note of all; it led the people into the wilderness first. God can say, now as ever, that He *begins with grace:* even the Ten Commandments were prefaced by—I am the Lord thy God!

Vers. 18, 19. The γάρ as demonstrating ὁμοία ἐστί, indicates a simple and apt interpretation of the simile, in the sense in which we have already explained and defended it. It is not now said—John *the Baptist*, for that would have required a corresponding

epitheton for the Son of Man, which it is not His purpose now to assume. Further, it is not said expressly—*Christ* came. The two *who had come* present themselves before us in their entire personality, and according to all that went before upon them, the one who should come, before the other who should come. This designation would at the sametime assure the people, if it were necessary, that the one who had come must certainly know who the other is, and did not put the question from any private doubt. Ἐσθίων and πίνων, in both cases the present participle, not as in the German Bible distinguished as preterite and present: for the two forms continue in conjoint testimony before the eyes of this generation, just as their twofold preaching is in strict accordance. Now in his imprisonment John has not become an eater and drinker![1] The hyperbolical expression—neither eating nor drinking, probably thus spoken by our Lord, receives in St Luke the further explanation which bread and wine furnishes; and in this we discern a reference to his food in the desert (which St Luke has not mentioned elsewhere), as well as to the word of the angel which dedicated him to be a Nazarene with spiritual power, even as Samson had been a Nazarene with physical strength. He did not eat and drink ordinarily like other men: No man ever *saw* him eat, so that he stood as it were, *above and confronting* all other men, just as Jesus *walked in their midst.* It was the same condescension in John as in Jesus, only in another form; the contrast and unison of them both constituted the fullest exhibition of the condescension of God to the need and the cry of this generation. The legal, strict ascetics receive the man of their choice, who should have suited them; though it was only to humble their pride by telling them that all their strict severity, wherein none of them could excel himself, would not avail for the kingdom of heaven, without repentance! They who were waiting and longing for the consolation and joy of the kingdom of heaven received their preacher in Jesus, who, with all His Messianic ἐξουσία in word and work, yet dealt with them so entirely

[1] To conclude from this present tense, that John must have still been actively engaged in his baptism, is entirely wrong. Yet *Sepp*, who knows nothing of the harmony, brings this forward, for the sake of casting an aspersion on the German Bible!

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as the *Son of Man* (and not as מַלְכָּא), that He must have been after their mind, if they had been in themselves, or had been made by John, poor in spirit and prepared for His Gospel. But they would only play : and that *their own* old play, each one after his own fashion, only seeing and never *hearing!* They who, at other times, were so easily moved to dance or to mourn at the sound of any pipe; now that God proposes to them the true play, find neither the one side of it nor the other, after their mind. Of the severe they say—δαιμόνιον ἔχει. Not indeed immediately, for at first they were constrained to say—He speaks truth, he is a prophet! for his words of lamentation sink deep into the heart. But they would not smite upon their breasts, and therefore they soon come to say—But He carries it too far with his enforced and strange mode of life, he is altogether too gloomy ; and finally, as the result of all, they stopped not short of—He is possessed, he hath a devil and is mad, *why hear ye him?* (Jno. x. 20). We learn here, that such was the eventual estimate and speech concerning John among the mass of the people, though it is not recorded after John retires before Jesus in the narrative. As He declares it, this must have been as notoriously true as what He, in his patient humility, said concerning Himself, that they scorn him as φάγος καὶ οἰνοπότης (with a *behold*, however, preceding), a friend of publicans and sinners. Thus this generation could not be dealt with aright by God ; what they find wanting in John, they condemn in Jesus, and inversely: they defend themselves against the severity of the one by thoughtless levity, and against the graciousness of the other they pretend to assume a godly strictness, and that which befell these two central representatives of all God's ministers, is but a parabolic exhibition for all ages. The legal element is too rigorous, too earnest, too morbid, for the people; the evangelical too lax, free grace being, to all Christian Pharisees, a suspicious and too liberal charter for all kinds of sinners. To this day the servant of Christ finds one and the other true as it regards the tone of his preaching and the manner of his life. One, according to the spirit which God endues him with in sending him, has more severity in his tone ; another more gentleness, though both agree in one. But those who have no ear, no heart to receive

the truth, have all the more mouth and boldness to condemn its witnesses, and to pronounce their rash verdict upon them, or upon everything else:—This or that is too violent and forced, too severe or too soft, too earnest or too mild, too narrow-minded or too expansive,—and if they have nothing else to say, too ordinary and human! To such a generation as this the true Messiah never comes, though with His Forerunner He has been long come; for it ever thinks of still *another* than this true one, and they *look for* this other or do not! It *appears* as if, like foolish children, they know not what they would have; but in fact they are not children, and know very well what they would *not* have —neither *repentance*, nor the *grace* which repentance obtains.

But are *all* men actually such, so that God has sent this preaching upon earth altogether in vain? Did no man justify God, who sent John and the Son of Man; did no man submit to the truth of God? Did all stumble at the offence, so that none were saved? 'Did not the βιάζεσθαι of the kingdom of heaven awake a corresponding *good* βιάζεσθαι in any hearts? The parable leaves this question unanswered; but as the preceding discourse had already given the encouraging answer, we must suppose, in order to harmonise this sorrowful lamentation with that, that the Lord would add some complementary word which would intimate that He spoke of the generation as a whole, *but not absolutely without exception.* With such a well-founded pre-supposition we pass on to the concluding sentence, which has been as much confused by expositors as ver. 12 itself. First, what is the *wisdom*, which is thus, in one word, so plainly contrasted with the childish folly previously depicted? Assuredly, as is self-evident, the wisdom *of God*, or God Himself, as He is wisdom, and therefore is personally spoken of as having τέκνα. The whole similitude had been a profound development of the saying of Solomon (Prov. xxix. 9), that "if a *wise man* contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest," he cannot gain his point; and our Lord's expression evidently points to that same book of holy writ, in which so much is written concerning "wisdom." (Let ch. i. 20—33; viii. 1, &c., &c., be just consulted.) Thus *God* now is opposed to men, that is in the persons of those whom He sends; just as in Lu.

xi. 49, the wisdom of God is expressly indicated by the Lord as the wisdom *which sends* the Prophets.[1] This is all that is meant here according to the whole connexion; and we cannot refer the word to the Son of God as the essential wisdom, however true that is in itself, for such a reference is less suitable here than in the passage just adduced in St Luke. For how can we suppose Him, who has just exhibited Himself as the eating and drinking Son of Man, who had humbly placed Himself through the whole discourse in juxtaposition with John, thus suddenly speak of Himself, and especially in the presence of all the people? That wisdom of God, which sends Prophets and Apostles, Elias and the Messiah, now ἐδικαιώθη. Now, though in the Greek this word often signifies to give a man his due by correction, even by *condemnation* (as in Rom. vi. 6), it never signifies *blaming* unjustly. Many expositors have perversely forced this meaning upon it, and even *Luther*, who quotes the old adage about the egg being more cunning than the hen, as if the lamentation still continued, and the Lord would say that wisdom must be content to be thus condemned and opposed by her children. The New Testament δικαιοῦν, like the Old Testament הִצְדִּיק, permits no such signification. Thus wisdom is *justified*, that she *is* wisdom, she is acknowledged, and her due honour given to her (Scholium: ἐτιμήθη), just as St Luke (ver. 29), had previously expressed it. And who are *her* children? Solomon tells us, in whose words Wisdom so often addresses her disciples, my son, my children: and who (ch. xxvii. 11) says, "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, *that I may answer him that reproacheth me!* This is strictly applicable to our passage. Yet not as many turn the thought, that she is justified and *defended*, and approves herself in the end in the persons of her children; that is, in the tone of lamentation still—*she must thus be justified.*[2] The emphatic πάντων of St Luke might indeed be adduced for

[1] This is decisive against *Sepp's* application, who, combining this with Lu. vi. 40, would read:—yet the wisdom of both these masters (John and Jesus) is justified by all *their* children.

[2] In which sense we might have understood *Luther's* translation, if he had not unhappily himself explained it otherwise—as we have mentioned before.

this:—it is incumbent upon them all to stand forth in her demonstration and defence.[1] But ἐδικαιώθη, as something already past, opposes that interpretation, which would have required the future—they will justify themselves, even the publicans and sinners, whom ye now so much scorn! Still less may it be understood as if the τέκνα were the Prophets and witnesses, *on account of* whom the justification should follow: for the *children* of wisdom are her *disciples*, not her preachers and teachers, and assuredly Christ Himself, could not be included under that designation. The word is thus simply reduced to this:—the truly childlike, docile τέκνα (preparatory to the νήπιοι, ver. 25), are opposed now to the childish παιδίοις:[2] such children of wisdom, who yield themselves up to her motherly care to be nursed, and even are new-born of her, *understand her*, acknowledge her, whatever *the evil world may say*: and the ἐδικαιώθη simply expresses this internal acknowledgment, which wisdom receives from them. It is put in the past tense to add to its force—it has been so from the beginning, whosoever has become a true child of wisdom has known and acknowledged her, (thus giving the πάντων of St Luke its full meaning): consequently even in this foolish generation there will not be, there are not wanting, docile souls who give God His glory. Thus the καί is to be taken as ἀλλά: *but* they do not all speak thus, some there are who wake up from the frivolous sport, and observe God's earnest dealings, the truth of God; find in *repentance* (ver. 21), the key which unlocks the preaching of John and of the Son of Man, experience the refreshment which is promised to the weary and heavy-laden—in short give wisdom her due as her true and genuine

[1] As *Braune* says: "Thus the weakest Christian must help to assert the honour of his Lord, and to stop the mouth of wickedness."

[2] Consequently we can least of all understand, with *von Gerlach*, and the ancient Greek expositors, δικαιοῦν ἀπὸ τῶν τέκνων, as if the persons here stood instead of their charge or accusation:—wisdom shall be absolved from the charges of her children, that is, of the perverse Jewish people! The objection that καί is not *but*, has no force when the usage of the New Testament and its Hebraizing proverbial forms are considered, although *Nitzsch*, who generally is so exact in his dealing with the word of Scripture, holds (Predigten V. Auswahl s. 123) that "Wisdom must justify herself *against* her children"; but this is in opposition to the whole context, and to Solomon, to whom reference is also made.

children. There lies in the ὀξύμωρον, by which *wisdom*, which should approve herself to all, yet needs justification even to those who acknowledge her. The undertone of *lamentation*, which the καί still connects with the preceding words, and which has confused the best expositors (as *Bengel's* obscure and diffuse comment in St Luke shows). And *in this* is the great grievance, that those others (as Job xxxviii. 2) have condemned the wisdom of God, and darkened it by their revilings,[1] so that their offence must be pressed through in order to that justification, which ought never to be necessary; and the children of wisdom, having inwardly acknowledged her, must outwardly also bear witness in her defence against that opposition. (For this also as an inference is included in the δικαιοῦν). But this defence is far from being successful in any γενεά: for the same offence is taken against the τέκνα as against the ἐρχομένους, and the Pharisees ever continue their taunt—Look at the publicans and sinners, His only dependents! or the Sadducees—See the people who fast and who pray, the disciples of the Master in the wilderness! What remains then in such a state of things? That one thing which the Lord simply declares—The docile and obedient, at least, whether many or few, acknowledging and confessing the wisdom of God with their hearts and their lips, have justified that wisdom, and have known how to discriminate all varieties of God's preaching like true hearers, and to harmonise like true disciples the diversified methods of the preachers. If this is concealed from the mass of a whole generation, if they deny it or utterly reject it, yet is this ἐδικαιώθη, a permanent and steadfast fact. Thus have we already the prelude in the soul of Christ, to that consolation which the Father reveals to Him in ver. 25; and this *solace* is the fundamental key-note of that rest and calm which concludes the whole discourse.

St Matthew has more reasons than one for not immediately proceeding with what follows, but interposing as it were a new

[1] "We must justify wisdom, though such ought not to be the case and is itself a reproach to man: for he who requires that wisdom should be justified to him, is himself a fool." (*Roos*).

heading to his discourse;—a practice which, we well know, He very sparingly adopts. He makes here a little more emphatic the pause which here and there is to be understood, though only understood, in all the longer discourses; he further impresses it upon us by the ἤρξατο (which is not merely a note that the suspended discourse goes on again, but is closely connected with ὀνειδίζειν), that the Lord now assumed a tone of severity in condemnation which He had never assumed before; He thus gives an explanation, by the way, concerning those many miracles which his Gospel had not specially recorded; and, finally, gives a very significant intimation that the μετανοεῖν afterwards mentioned by the Lord was the great and essential point. On the other the τότε ἤρξατο[1] leaves no room for the supposition that sayings uttered on other occasions are bound together here, more especially as the internal connection of the whole of the chapter is entirely opposed to that supposition. According to Lu. x. 13—15, 21, 22, the Lord repeated all this on the mission and return of the Seventy, nor can we see any reason why that repetition might not have taken place: for the discourse there as well as here is consistent and connected, and we find within the limits of each individual Gospel, evidences that it is our Lord's method often to repeat what He had spoken before. We find that in Matt. x. 15 a prelude was given of what in ch. xi. is expanded in detail: now when that prelude occurs again in Lu. x. 12 what could be more natural than that the same detail should follow it once more. And that not in the thoughts of the compiling Evangelist, collecting together the sayings of the Lord, but in the spirit of the Lord Himself, who in His pædagogic wisdom and condescension, already had begun to repeat some of His most impressive and important sayings.

St Matthew's exhibition of this discourse would have been without its full and perfect close, if to the simile of vers. 16—19, there had not been added a yet severer denunciation of their guilt (vers. 21—24), followed by the return to gentle and affec-

[1] Which *Alford* also correctly urges, as proving it to be "quite impossible that this should be a collection of our Lord's sayings uttered at different times," and regards it with perfect truth as rather "a token of the report of an ear-*witness*, and as pointing to a pause or change of manner on the part of our Lord."

tionate invitation (vers. 25—30). The Lord first lightly condemned the unbelief of the generation as childish folly; but that must not suffice, for these unbelievers are no children, and their deeper guiltiness He must more deeply denounce. His ὀνειδίζειν, which is on that account recorded by St Matthew, is not merely a lamentation over labour expended in vain, although that would partake of the human passion of rebuking love, but is pre-eminently the zealous anger of holy truth against their sin. Gracious as is the Son of Man in His exhibition of Himself as the friend of publicans and sinners, He can also insist upon repentance, and threaten judgments upon the impenitent as severely as John himself: yea, more rigorously and severely than he, since He is Himself the Judge. There is *no other who will come* after Him, but He that has come will *one day come again* to judgment!

Vers. 21—24. The Lord utters a *woe* which is the antithesis of the *blessed* in ver. 6; just as in the Sermon on the Mount, according to Lu. vi. 24—26. He gives a pre-intimation of what the desolate end will be (Matt. xxiii); but now He goes not beyond Galilee, where the great light had hitherto shone most brightly into the darkness. The *Chorazin* here only mentioned, and the well-known *Bethsaida*, are specified as representative, for the reason which St Matthew gives, of many other κωμοπόλεις, standing in similar case: in contradiction to these the capital stands alone, with its more definite and impressive καὶ σύ, as we said before. That is to say not as the capital of Galilee, properly speaking and in the ordinary sense (for this was Tiberias, the residence of Herod, whether the Lord on that account more seldom came); but *Capernaum* as in reality greater and more proud, which had taken the place of Nazareth as "his own city" (ch. iv. 13). He does not rebuke Nazareth by name, though so malevolent towards Himself; the affectionate and sorrowful love with which He ever thinks of it forbids that, as also His wisdom, which would avoid every appearance of evil. He does not rebuke such as have injured and persecuted Himself personally, but such as have refused to repent. We read of no enmity or persecution to which He was subjected in Capernaum; but the careless and indifferent reception of His word and works was yet worse, and more condemnable than any erup-

tion of malice would have been; it bespoke that slothful, dead, impassive indifference, for which nothing more could be done. The exaltation of Capernaum to heaven is generally regarded as referring to the honour which had accrued to it from being the dwelling-place of Christ: but though this was the immediate cause of the special allusion to its name, we cannot admit that allusion in *this* expression. The Lord's humility would have prevented that; besides which the contrasted bringing down to hell points to another interpretation. The words do not refer to any honour which He had put upon this city, but to a state of external prosperity which would come to a frightful end, to the imperious and sinful pride with which she had exalted herself. According to Benjamin of Tudela, Capernaum lay so high, that at first sight it appeared higher than Carmel, and Nonnus on Jno. vi. 59, calls it *βαθυκρηπις καφαρναούμ*. Probably it was not without figurative allusion to this external pre-eminence that the Lord indicated it as the Galilean *Jerusalem*, and in such a manner that the unnamed city on the hill must be thought of when He announces its coming fate. The expressions themselves, however, are taken from Prophetic Scripture, and point back to the pride and ruin of Babel or *Babylon*. Isa. xiv. 13—15; compare as to Jerusalem and Israel, Isa. lvii. 9.[1]

The *δυνάμεις* which were done in you, which were done in thee, refer back to vers. 5 and 12; since the wonderful works of our Lord were a most decisive testimony and demonstration of the offered kingdom of heaven, and they constituted in themselves a most effectual preaching of repentance and faith. How much that is not recorded may the *πλεῖσται* of ver. 20 include! All *the works of Christ* are a call to hear, a confirmation of the word so strong, that unbelief is by them rendered the more inexcusable. Jno. xiv. 10, 11, 24, x. 37. It cannot be sophistically explained away that the Lord manifestly, both here and there, assigns to the miracles which their eyes beheld, the highest place among the external means of grace which were appointed of God. As He indicates in the *μετανοεῖν*, which lays the ground of the *πιστεύειν*, springing also from a preparatory degree of it,

[1] We find traces of the once celebrated city Capernaum in the earlier records of travellers: but no ruins of it are discernible now. (Comp. *Robinson's* Palestine on this point.)

the decisive and distinctive turning-point on the side of man, (and this explanation belongs essentially also to vers. 16—19), so does the judgment take its rise from the despising of God's miraculous works, a judgment, therefore, more fearful than that which will fall upon the heathen cities, to which no such signs were given.

To the two cities, two others are first opposed: and then one city to the one. *Tyre* and *Sidon*, laid waste according to prediction, by Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander, lay in the neighbourhood, and their judgment was the less as they still *stood* restored in a measure from their ruin. Acts xii. 20, xxi. 3—7, xxvii. 3.[1] Hence it could only be said of *Sodom* afterwards, with increased emphasis, that it would have remained to this day. The guilt of unbelieving, contradicting Israel had even in old time been represented as surpassing that of Sodom and Gomorrha, bye-words among the Prophets for wickedness; how much more may the Lord so speak, now that they have consummated their unbelief! In Deut. xxxii. 32, Israel is likened to Sodom, as also in Isa i. 10; but in Lament. iv. 6 and Ezek. xvi., it is further added that Israel's abominations surpassed! Let the *pride* of Sodom, as it is depicted in Ezek. xvi. 48—50, be especially observed; and it will commend the view of the exaltation of Capernaum, which we have given above.

They would long ago, in *their time*, when the judgment was coming upon them, have repented in order to avert it; and, indeed, in *sackcloth* and *ashes*, like Nineveh, which thus escaped its judgment. Jonah iii. 6; (comp. 2 Ki. vi. 30; Jer. vi. 26; Dan. ix. 3). Many regard this latter addition, not as strengthening, according to the tone of the whole discourse, but as softening the expression:—They would have, at least externally, humbled themselves, and thus, like Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 27—29), made propitiation; but this is altogether inapplicable here, for the Judge, as in Isa. lviii. 5, looks at the sincerity of the heart. Thus much, however, the addition to μετενόησαν tells us, that

[1] But it is obvious that the Lord does not intend these new cities (to which *Sepp* thinks He might, in his obscure visitation of Phœnicia, have paid an acceptable visit!) but the ancient cities, which the Prophets rebuked, and which had been laid waste: for these are the proper parallel with Sodom.

the penitent expression of guilt, true penance as such, is to be made prominent in connexion with "change of mind," and consequently, Luther's translation may be justified. Let it be further observed with what absolute and sublime assurance the Lord speaks as Judge, and therefore as searcher of hearts and as knowing all hidden things: the Father exhibits to Him the coming judgment, and gives Him at the same moment the glance of Omniscience, so that He can speak of what would have taken place in any age, among any people, under any circumstances. This is not merely a common mode of speech, but must, like all the Lord's sayings, be precisely interpreted. It directs us to that *scientia media, de futuro conditionato sive futuribili,* as the Schoolmen have it, which is not, however, an invention of Jesuitical casuistry, but the only true reconciliation of the counsels of God with the freedom of man. The history which contains the visitations of God's anger against Tyre and Sidon, and the destruction of Sodom to this day, rests not upon any coherence of natural events simply, nor upon the unconditional decree of God, but upon the freedom of man; their judgments were drawn down upon them by their sin, and would not have fallen upon them, if the doomed had repented in time.

But now the Lord's words rise yet higher:—they would have repented, *if* the greater means of grace had been afforded them! This is a deep saying, and of vast and far-reaching consequence; a *dictum probans* that cannot be too much pondered, against all that narrow and bigoted dogmatism which, swifter to judge than the merciful and righteous Lord Himself, would rashly decide the eternal damnation of the heathen, not to say of all those multitudes of Christians, who, in their life-time, never had what might be called a clear testimony of the truth. To say that God is under no obligation to give the grace of life equally to all sinners, and that He was justified in punishing Sodom and Gomorrha in their iniquity, does not help the case; for God is *under obligation* to no sinner, and He would have been justified in punishing the whole world, instead of redeeming it:—but yet He did redeem it. When the Redeemer Himself, whose coming into the world is itself the great, decisive witness of all-merciful love, declares that the failure to repent, and therefore the want of salvation, was, in the case of many, the result of the

lack of greater grace—what is the irrefragable inference which must ensue? Is it merely that the half-permitted, half-presumptuous question is excited—wherefore did not God give it to them, or will he yet give it to them, that they may repent? No, it follows, according to the plain answer which He Himself appended, that *it will be more tolerable* in the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrha, for heathens, Jews and Christians who have been hurried in their sins to eternity, but who, with fuller grace, might have repented, than for those who enjoyed upon earth the complete testimony of God's will, but rejected it against themselves. This word stretches far and deep. There is promised to Sodom (in Ezek. xvi. 53, 55) a bringing again of their captivity and a return to their estate; but that indefinite Old Testament expression receives here its true meaning and explanation. The *day of judgment* can only be the last day of final doom;[1] as there will then, however, be no more room for reaching or conversion, but only the full revelation of what had been already decreed, it might seem to follow that an intermediate state of grace and corrective judgment must be presumed, between their judgments recorded in history and their final judgment, between the death of the sinners, and that damnation of unbelievers which will follow the finished preaching of the Gospel. Thus does the Lord speak words which might be thought to oppose equally the false dogmatics of condemnation, and those of general restoration; those carried away in their sins may yet find space of repentance, but those who rejected the full testimony of the Gospel will find no more salvation. There is a veil, however, thrown by our Lord over the whole subject of the dealings of God's judgment beyond time (Rom. xi. 33): He only uses the indefinite ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται which might be applied simply to degrees of condemnation corresponding with degrees of salvation. He does not predict the damnation of any particular inhabitant of Chorazin, Bethsaida, or Caper-

[1] In the external judgment upon Israel, to which these words have been incorrectly limited, there is only a symbolical exhibition of that which is here indicated. Otherwise the Lord must have spoken in the pret. instead of the fut.:—It was more tolerable for Sodom, than it will be for Galilee and Israel when their calamities come.

naum, for He speaks only of those cities in the mass: no more does He determine the conversion and salvation of any individual inhabitants of Sodom or Gomorrha. For it does not by any means follow that they who believed not when the long-suffering of God waited for them in the flesh, would believe the preaching of the Gospel to the dead; so far as *πάλαι ἂν μετενόησαν* might be applied to them, there would seem to be some room left for hope in that mercy of God which never forgot mortal man.

Vers. 25, 26. *Olshausen's* confident assumption that the formula *ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ*—occurring in a similar way in ch. xii. 1—indicates that what follows was uttered on *another* occasion, springs from his already-mentioned idiosyncracy concerning St Matthew's collections of our Lord's discourses, and is refuted both by the train of thought, and by the *ἀποκριθείς*, which cannot be understood of anything but a strict connexion. Every unbiassed reader must discern *here* something more than the mere indefinite beginning of a discourse, equivalent to the Hebrew ענה; nor is it merely, as it were, a third *ἤρξατο* (after vers. 7, 20) indicating a new turn in its sentiment; but the internal contrast of the following with the preceding words leads us to its meaning. The Lord *answers* His own words, which had passed from lamentations to threatenings of judgment, by a composing and solacing change of expression; submitting Himself to the Father's righteous decrees, He returns back again to the language of gracious invitation. If we were to regard these new words as *addressed to the Father*, the *answer* would be understood in all its profound meaning. The *Father* has previously spoken to His Son by a secret inspiration which comforts His soul, and stills its holy perturbation; and the Son now responds to that secret voice by His *ἐξομολογοῦμαί σοι*—even so, Father, Thy council is right, I will only Thy righteous will and decree! Such an internal process in the soul of Jesus, when we conceive it aright, prepares the way at least for the sublime words of ver. 27; and on their repetition (Lu. x. 21), the consolation seems to have been strengthened in His living remembrance, for we read *ἠγαλλιάσατο τῷ πνεύματι.*

This is, as far as we know, the first public *invocation* of the Father before all the people,[1] and the only one that occurred

[1] *Roos:* These precious words are the first record of communion

before that final period, when Jesus twice (Jno. xi. 41; xii. 28), thus spoke in the hearing of man, and the last instances in Gethsemane, and on the Cross. It indicates an extraordinary emotion excited by a moment of sublime and critical solemnity. He calls Him Father, but not adding *Lord*, in the absolute sense, which only became the Son under the veil of prophecy, and in the deep humiliation of His humanity. *Lord of heaven and earth*:—this is something more; it is generally the solemn invocation of prayer, and here particularly the appropriate reference to that sovereign counsel which embraces, penetrates, directs all things that are. But what is that decree of the righteous Father, His concurrence with which the Son so solemnly declares, with His *even so* of glory and praise? That not all *can* be saved, and therefore, indeed, *should* not, that salvation is only given to the humble who receive it, but denied to the proud opposers. Did the Son find His solace in this, and shall we poor children reject it? Let us take good heed, that we do not likewise fall into the condemnation of the wise and prudent! Let us rather endeavour, as far as we may, to enter into the feeling of the heart of the Godman, which blends together and reconciles sayings:—more tolerable for Sodom than for thee, and—Come unto me, all ye that are weary! The giving or denying of salvation is not expressly mentioned, yet nothing less is meant by the *revealing* and the *hiding*, inasmuch as all must depend upon the knowledge of the counsel and plan of salvation. In the deep and mysterious ταῦτα, which concisely includes the impressive contrasts of the preceding discourse, the faith and unbelief, the μακάριος and οὐαί, and the things concerning them, inconceivably much is said, but inconceivably more is unspoken. The *wise and prudent* (σοφοὶ καὶ συνετοί, significantly twofold) are obviously those who after the flesh are prudent, the proud whose blind wisdom opposes the eternal wisdom of God (ver. 19; 1 Cor. i. 19—21, 27. According to Hagada schel Pesach pag. 5, the Jews said every year at the Passover, we all are wise, we all are understanding, we all have knowledge of the law: thus perversely appropriating (Deut. iv. 6—8), since they were quite ignorant of the very essence of the law, knowing no more of the preaching of

between the Son of God and His Father, which the Evangelists have given us.

repentance, that of that which was its end and aim, the reception of grace in Christ. In the grandest and most general application of the words, the Jews must appear as the falsely wise, the heathen as the docile babes;[1] although the word penetrates much deeper, and found its first application in the distinction of the scribes and the common people, the Jews and the *Galileans*; indeed, in our own day, it asserts its truth in ever new distinctions between the falsely wise and the truly simple, so that *the revelation* may be *concealed* even from many a doctor thought to be orthodox. It is the Father's will to reveal His salvation to all, even as it is the Son's to give rest to all; but just as only the heavy-laden can find that rest, so can the wisdom and truth of God only be revealed to the babes and simple ones.[2] To give this revelation to the wise, and to give this consolation to the satisfied, are alike impossible, for that would be to give to those who will not receive.[3] In the salvation of any man, that freedom which is permitted to Him by His Creator, must exercise a deciding influence: and this is the inscrutable and unimpeachable counsel of the Father, which must ever be adored, even when through the opposition of a free agent, the revelation becomes hiding, and instead of giving is withholding (Deut. xxxii. 4, 5.) Thus will the righteousness of God be justified to the children of wisdom, even in its *ἀποκρύπτειν*. *Νήπιοι* are the פְּתָאִים of the Old Testament (Ps. xix. 8, cxvi. 6, cxix. 130; Prov. i. 4, &c.), who are free and accessible to instruction, who yield themselves up like little children to be taught and disciplined: and in this word the Lord has in view that great passage (Ps. viii. 3), which He afterwards so sublimely explained. He then rises from this little band of *μικροί*, who, however, under

[1] In the Clementines (Hom. viii. 6) it is quoted: *ὅτι ἔκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις θηλάζουσιν*—in which *Hilgenfield* rightly regards the Jews as the wise elders, and opposed to them the Gentile Christians (Comp. Hom. xviii. 15).

[2] "Because the babes, not perverted, are in reality more cultured than the wise and prudent of this world." *Petersen*, Lehre von der Kirche i. 135.

[3] Most assuredly, those who, wise in their own conceits, are here referred to, so that we cannot say with *von Gerlach*:—The wise might better descend to the level of the babes, than these rise to the level of the wise. It is, alas, far otherwise, and that is not the Lord's meaning.

the training of God will become men and conquerers, to the supreme and only Father, and subsides from His holy indignation into the εὐδοκία addressed to Him. (Comp. Lu. xii. 32). It is the same sacred will of the Father, which shows itself as good and gracious to the saved, and as righteous to those lost through their persistent guilt; and it is now sealed by the *Even so* of the Son, whose will was so entirely to save them all. The ἐξομολογοῦμαι (incorrectly translated by *Erasmus, gratias ago*, I thank thee; as also of late by *Ebrard*;—for that would have required ἐυχαριστῶ, Jno. xi. 41), expresses praise which springs from, and consists in, acknowledgment and accordance: *Bengel*, therefore, says with as much depth as truth—*summa ἐξομολογήσεως filialis, næ Pater!* This is the decisive yea which protests against all the contradiction of worldly wisdom, and will be justified at the last day and through eternity: and it forms the transition to the following words concerning the Father and the Son.

Ver. 27. Besides in this place, and in the parallel of St Luke, we find in the three first Evangelists only once more "the Son" occurring absolutely, and that is in Mar. xiii. 32. This utterance of our Lord is, as men say, entirely *Johannean;* and that it occurs in St Matt. and St Luke is sufficient to show the unison between these gospels and the Gospel of St John. We find an evidence of the genuineness of these words in their obvious correspondence, uttered as they were immediately after John's message, with the testimony which he had once given to his disciples concerning the Father and the Son (Jno. iii. 35, 36); just as we found in Matt. ix. 15, a similar reference to Jno. iii. 29. No exposition can exhaust, no dogmatic speculation can penetrate, the depths of this saying, which points to the deep things of the Godhead: We do better to spell it out in simplicity with the babes, and to yield up our souls thus to the mighty and effectual revelation of the Holy Spirit, who will teach us what is the confession of the Father and the Son. The first thing which such child-like reading must emphasize, is the distinctive "*to me*," and seeking Him, in the obedience of His subsequent revelation—come *unto me!* We shall find Him, and in Him all that He may and that He will reveal unto His own. Then the παρέδοθη, as inscrutable as it is absolute, which by no means applies only to the Son of Man in His humanity, but to the Eternal Son, who also as the Son hath

received all things from the Father (Jno. v. 26). *Πάντα* is just as comprehensive in its range as the *ταῦτα* previously, to which it corresponds: but the Son cannot simply say, that all things are *revealed* unto Him. He Himself is the Revealer, even as the Father is. It is not all *power* in heaven and earth (Matt. xxvii. 18) which is immediately contemplated here; but the full perception and knowledge of eternal truth, and the justification of the supreme wisdom of God's counsel. God is Himself Truth and Wisdom, *He knoweth Himself* in the Trinity of His Being, reciprocally as Father and Son in the unity of the Spirit. But the third Person is not here expressly mentioned, because He was not yet manifest, as the Son was in the Son of Man (ver. 19). What completeness does this give to the discourse of this chapter, compact and rounded as it everywhere is, when such a testimony to His divine and eternal dignity is set over against the deep humiliation of Him who had come into the generation of that age! The Son hath all things to reveal and to administer, but as *given Him* of the Father: thus, even while He is testifying of His own supreme dignity, He first gives honour to the Father, and then proceeds to cry: Come unto Me, for only with Me and in Me, is every thing to be found!

Luther's translation "kennet" does not fully correspond to the *ἐπιγινώσκει*, which signifies a perfect and living perception and knowledge: hence we have in Lu. x., *γινώσκει τίς ἐστιν*, that is, what the names *Father* and *Son* would signify *ad intra*.[1] *No man* knoweth that:—a gracious and earnest warning for all the wise and prudent, who conceive themselves qualified to investigate what is in the nature of God, without the illumination of the Spirit of God. Well had it been if Christian dogmatics, both before and since *Athanasius*, had remembered this warning of the Son, and been content to speak of the mysteries of the Trinity in no other words than those which the Son reveals to the babes, and gives to the heavy-laden who come to Him as their living

[1] Thus by a true interpretation we repel a certain recent criticism, which asserts the aorist *ἔγνω* to be the true reading, as it was found in many ancient quotations of the Fathers: imagining that the Evangelists saw themselves constrained to change the expression on account of its dangerous service to the *Gnostics* (in their notion that the God of Jesus was an altogether new and hitherto unknown God).

and life-giving knowledge! It was first said, no man knoweth the Son but the Father. The unexpressed inference, which is necessarily to be drawn from these premises, is, that we must know *the Father*, in order to know the Son. It is further added, —but the Father doth not reveal Himself immediately, but in the Son. Thus it remains established, as it is testified in Jno. xiv. 8, 9, vi. 46, i. 18, that the Son alone immediately knoweth the Father as such and in Himself, all others know Him mediately through the Son. The Son *revealeth* simply, as the ἀποκαλύψαι at the end (without *Luther's* addition—*it*) is designed to signify: He revealeth Himself, and in Himself the Father, and πάντα ταῦτα of eternal wisdom in the plan of salvation, which have their issues in eternal salvation and damnation.[1] This is the mystery of God, of which Col. ii. 2 speaks, be the true reading whichever it may; and this is the internal principle of that in Rev. x. 7 which is to be fulfilled in history. It might have run in conclusion, after the analogy of Scripture usage elsewhere, as Matt. xvi. 17, Jno. vi. 45,—and to whomsoever *the Father* will reveal; but this form of expression which was used in ver. 25, is now limited to its only possible meaning and application, just as the sentiment of ver. 46 immediately follows ver. 45 in Jno. vi. The Father only revealeth in the revelation of the Son. But whatever appearance of arbitrary, exclusive election in the will of God there might be in ᾧ ἐὰν βούληται, is emphatically removed by the words which immediately follow in which the Son Himself then present calls *all* to Himself!

Ver. 28. This sentence is as universal and unconditional as the preceding. But it must be attentively observed that the Lord does not continue to speak of revelation and knowledge: they who would know and *see*, must *come*, and receive the revelation in the living experience of the ἀνάπαυσις; that only being the true learning of God's simple ones.[2] Only by living expe-

[1] If we were to supply ἀυτὸν τὸν πατέρα—which, indeed, cannot but be right in itself,—we should overlook the design for which this αὐτόν is omitted; that is, in order that the end should round off into the style of the beginning, with a general idea. It is *Revelation*, generally, that is concerned.

[2] As *Roos* has very beautifully said, "Our true notion of the Divinity of the Son depends not upon any hard thought, or scholastic sub-

rience of God's grace can we know God, and this proceeds from faith to faith. What then is the way to faith in Him who has come, in which the offence is overcome, and salvation is attained through Him? In theory it is the casting away of all wisdom and prudence of self in order to a childlike concurrence with the *Nὰι ὁ πατήρ*, which the Son utters for our example: but in practice, without which theory has no value, it is the obedience of the word of that same Son, the acceptance of that word which the Son of Man in meekness and humility utters to the children of men:—*Δεῦτε πρός με.*

The whole of this comprehensive conclusion of the discourse (vers. 28—30), is a text inexhaustibly to be preached from! *Who is it* that invites, beseeches, and calls? The eternal Son of the eternal Father, for us become a son of man! *Whom* does He call? All, all who will know themselves to be what they are, weary and heavy-laden! What does He *promise* to them? Refreshment and rest for their souls! What does He *require* as the condition? Nothing, absolutely nothing but *coming:* and when they are come and have already received His consolation, only the abiding with Him, *learning* of Him!

In Eccles. xxiv. 25—27 (in the corrected German text, vers. 21, 22, Gk. vers. 19, 20), the eternal Wisdom utters her own praise and invites men to herself, and the Lord here uses words which almost seem to be the echo of that passage in His own Spirit, for He had often read those words. The first *Δεῦτε πρός με* is uttered with Divine majesty, precisely as the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel cries (Isa. xlv. 22):—פְּנוּ־אֵלַי וְהִוָּשְׁעוּ כָּל־אַפְסֵי אָרֶץ. This single word in the mouth of one son of man, calling all others to Himself that He may save them from all their need, is ample and sufficient testimony that He is more than man: this is the manner of man, but of man who is great, He that is great, even the Lord God! (2 Sam. vii. 19, 22; 1 Chron. xvii. 18.) He only who could speak of Himself (ver.

tilty, but upon this—that the Son be in such sense the end of our coming, believing, desire and hope, that we never go beyond Him for their satisfaction." In which connection of vers. 27 and 28, we may once more observe that the Son immediately reveals Himself and only in Himself the Father.

27) could follow it with ver. 28.[1] Oh how does the eternal mercy of God express itself in the tenderness and grace of the Saviour's human heart! How natural is it to regard Him as looking round, and stretching out His arms and saying—Only come unto me, come, and *wait no longer for another*, I am He, let *me* not wait upon you! How would He, after this grief over those who were rushing into judgment and sorrow, take His own comfort in those whom He might solace, to whom He would all the more ardently extend all that salvation which the others had cast away or refused!

All men *are* actually weary, and heavy laden; labouring and dejected under the yoke of sin and vanity, of death and destruction; and so far the invitation is *to all.* This might be our first simple exposition, which would then make κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι only the same thing viewed under two aspects, *active* and *passive.* But with this it must also be observed, that He by no means excludes those who are miserable through physical and earthly external unhappiness, though He gives them no promises of help merely as such. We find no example of His having invited to Himself the merely bodily wretched: and we must interpret the words in the same sense as the poor and the mourners are understood in the Sermon on the Mount. Hence we have here at the conclusion the true intepretation of the miraculous works which in ver. 6, were exhibited as *signs* of the Gospel preached to the poor. If the heavy-laden feel their burden as the burden of their spirits, then shall they find rest *unto their souls.* The contrast of the yoke and the burden (vers. 29, 30), tells us that the Lord lays His emphasis upon "heavy-laden," as the peculiar and fundamental idea. But what is the burden of the soul, which may be exchanged for His light burden? First of all, as it regards Israel, in whose midst this cry is heard, the Pharisaical yoke of the law (ch. xxiii. 4), then, further, also the law imposed of God (Acts xv. 10), with all its wearisome and hard observances of worship; then again as regards all men,

[1] *Roos* again: "Clearly to perceive and to feel this, we have only to imagine an apostle saying—Come unto me, &c. Would not such words in the mouth of an apostle be meaningless and blasphemous presumption? The same may be applied to all the sayings of our Lord, wherever He speaks of Himself. We need not so anxiously and carefully go about to collect proofs of Christ's Divinity."

it is sin, on account of which these laws are imposed by God or man, with all the disquietude of an evil conscience without atonement, and the service of things that perish and satisfy not; yea, all that oppresses and weighs down the soul in the utmost comprehensiveness of these words, from that restless, hot pursuit of sin which finds no peace, as the wickedest children of the world well know, down to the gratuitous burden which even a Martha among the disciples of Jesus may impose upon herself. Thus *heavy-laden* in ten thousand ways are all men everywhere, and so the "all" of the invitation is in open contrast with the "no man" of ver. 27. But why then do not all come to Him? This question leads us to observe that κοπιῶντες is subject to a necessary *restriction* and connects itself with πεφορτισμένοι, as τῷ πνεύματι with πτωχοί. It means not here, according to its usual meaning elsewhere, those who labour simply, and strain their energies; for such vehement personal labour and exertion, as long as it is fruitlessly put forth, effectually hinders from coming to the only source of reinvigoration; but it means, according to the proper and original idea of the word, those who are *exhausted* and spent, who pressed down by their burden, can bear it no longer. (Thus the καί is a *Vav exegeticum* for *because*, as in Jno. xi. 26). Though He may call all, yet is His call heard only by those who feel their burden and would be freed from it: this is the mediating link between the offer and acceptance of salvation. Where the law, and sin, and the world, and the flesh have so long burdened the spirit, that the soul is brought to confess and mourn the burden, to despair of deliverance in its own strength; there is that spark of longing in the spirit to which grace can address itself, and which it comes down to meet. The Lord stands in the midst of humanity and utters His call: he who follows Him approves himself thereby to be one who is susceptible of salvation, and whose will is rightly disposed: all others, who have long heard His call in vain, will one day hear in earnest the awful—*depart from Me!* ch. xxv. 41. But He does not now cry in another voice, Remain at your distance from Me, all ye proud and satisfied ones, who are better pleased with the galling yoke than with my easy burden. No, He cries also to them, *Come ye too*, but come as the weary and the wretched! So will I *give you rest* also—compare ἀνα-

πάνσω Isa. xxviii. 12, in the Orig. and Sept. (where עָיֵף clearly corresponds to κοπιῶν) Isa. lvii. 15. Sept., Jer. xxxi. 25 in the Heb.

Ver 29. The *yoke* here does not involve the idea of subjection to authority; this would be actually opposed to the context, for the Lord explains Himself immediately afterwards by *learn of Me!* The expression was used proverbially among the Jews for the receiving of instruction, and discipline, as is plainly seen in Eccles. li. 33, 35, and also in passages like Jer. v.; Prov. i. 8, 9. The Jews speak of a עול תורה, and in the Mischna we find קבילו עליכו עול מלכותא קדישא, take upon you the yoke of the holy kingdom. In the *Sohar* the yoke of the kingdom of heaven is spoken of, and elsewhere the Thephillim (prayer-fringes) are represented as the cords of the yoke, by which God binds Israel to Himself. We find it said "how beautiful is their neck, which beareth the yoke of my precepts; it sitteth upon them as the yoke upon the neck of the ox, which plougheth the field, and nourisheth both himself and his master." This proverb as a *Jewish* one, had assuredly a legal origin and a legal savour clinging to it,—but the Lord speaks catachrestically of His easy yoke, though not without intimating thereby that obeying as well as learning, was involved in coming to Him: as a gracious teacher, whose heart is set on having disciples, the Lord just offers and recommends His yoke, His doctrine and discipline: then proceeds He a little farther, and leaving the first simple promise κἀγὼ ἀναπαύσω gives all clearly to understand that this ἀνάπαυσις is not in its fullest extent to be instantly secured, but that a continuous *learning* in His school is essential, to which a continuous and progressive *finding* will correspond. The former is the condition of the latter. They who seek their soul's rest out of Him, are the most heavy-laden of all, for they find an ever-increasing burden of disquietude: they, however, who come to Him, will most assuredly find what they perseveringly seek. He encourages the proud children of men, who even after finding the true teacher learn so unwillingly and so slowly, to progress in His instructions, by the assurance which He adds, that they shall ever find in Him a *meek and lowly* Master. For I am *meek of heart*, although I spake words of such stern condemnation,

ver. 20, 24; I judge, because all judgment hath been committed unto Me of the Father, as the Son of Man, but condemn no man who only cometh and learneth of Me. I am *lowly of heart*, notwithstanding that I have borne witness to Myself as Son of the Father, vers 25—27, I place Myself among the foolish little ones, to share in every way their experience. Both meekness and humility (not merely the latter!) are human attributes, which only the one Son of Man so possesses that He can fully claim them as His own, and unconditionally proclaim them. This is indicated by τῇ καρδίᾳ which refers probably to both, and opens to us in the most engaging manner the full, voluntary condescension and love of His incarnate *Jesus-heart*. This is the *only instance* in which καρδία is spoken of in connexion with Jesus.

Ye shall find rest unto your souls, is literally taken from Jerem. vi. 16, and not after the incorrect rendering of the LXX. This promise, as it is finally given, comes *after* the testimony to His meekness and lowliness, in order to intimate to all who progress in the school of Christ, that nothing else is to be learned from Him but the becoming, through His grace, by some degrees *what He is*, Eph. iv. 2. For meekness and lowliness is itself the rest *of the soul*, even though the burden and disquietude may not be externally removed. Anger and pride create disquietude: he who finds not rest with the meek and lowly One, must be still oppressed by them; the failing is in him, and not in the yoke and burden of Christ.

Ver. 30. Has He then also a *yoke* and a *burden?* Assuredly, for the heavy-laden can find no help without subjection to the grace and truth of God. The one yoke only gives place to the other: independent and gods we can never be. Rom. vi. 16—18. But the Lord only terms that which He opposes a *yoke*, in contradistinction to the other, just as St Paul speaks of the *law* of faith. There it is a law, and yet no law: here it is a yoke and yet no yoke. Hence the adjectives which are appended—*easy* (or pleasant, agreeable) and *light*, in a certain sense, withdraw the word, in its strict meaning again. The yoke is no burden imposed, but actually a means by which burdens may be rendered tolerable and easily borne. St Bernard cries, "what can be lighter than a burden which takes our burdens away; and a yoke which bears up the bearer himself?" This is the gracious aspect

of the words, as they regard that new nature which, learning from the love of Jesus to love both God and man, can say—His commandments are not grievous! But for the old Adam, which, in its stubbornness and pride, can never know rest, and as such is never to be revivified but to be put to death, the easy yoke and light burden is no other than—*the cross*, of which He had already spoken in ch. x. 38, 39. This is undoubtedly the undertone of meaning which they who learn of Him will perceive in due time; it is contained in the thrice repeated ζυγός μου, and φορτίον μου:—the yoke and the burden, which I myself bear as your master and forerunner! What fulness of meaning does this give to the words of the meek and lowly One, who so graciously submitted to the uttermost self denial and the burden of the cross! Thus it is only, at first,—Come unto Me! and immediately on coming there is a first refreshment. Then comes in the continued learning of Him, and the finding that only through Him, through following and resembling Him, the rest of the soul is gained. Finally, there is the persevering advancement under the yoke of His cross, in all the profound meaning of that word: with which is connected, however, the gracious encouragement which arms the Christian against all the opposition of fleshly impatience and refractoriness, the assurance which approves its truth in sure experience:—*my* yoke is nevertheless, easy, *my* burden is nevertheless light.[1] And when that day comes, which shall make manifest those who preferred to bear the yoke of Satan, and the burden of sin, it shall be found that the Lord's words were truth, and that His most burdened follower had an incomparably better allotment in the profound peace of the soul which He bestows, than all the slaves of lust with the disquietude of their guilty conscience. Dost thou not yet know this, dear reader, dost thou not say Yea and Amen to this from thine heart? Then take it now to thyself, and let the word of thy Redeemer pursue thee in all thy ways, untll thou art constrained to yield up thy heart to its obedience:—*Come unto Me! Learn of Me!*

[1] "It is not difficult to be a Christian. Only make the earnest attempt; take not up the Gospel, however, as a light thing, but upon both shoulders."—*Braune.*

THE DISCIPLES PLUCK CORN ON THE SABBATH. THE SON OF MAN LORD OF THE SABBATH.

(Matth. xii. 3—8; Mark. ii. 25—28; Luke vi. 3—52).

The chronology of the incident is altogether uncertain, as it is not Matthew's object to give a consecutive narration of the events, but here in chap. xii. only to depict the *enmity of the Pharisees*, as shown on two Sabbaths, in order thus to prepare the way for the principal discourse directed against them from ver. 25 onwards. Luke, however, gives a very exact determination of the time, inasmuch as he calls the Sabbath on which the ears of corn were plucked, δευτερόπρωτον, a word unfortunately found nowhere else, and regarded as obscure even from the earliest antiquity, and which, indeed, it would be most convenient to omit, as is done in the Syriac; or to cancel as a false reading.[1] It is not our object to enter minutely into such collateral circumstances. Along with the majority of commentators, and last of all, *Lülkert* (Stud. u. Krit. 1835, 3. 664), we are inclined to prefer the opinion first confirmed by *Scaliger* to all the other opinions of the learned who have exercised their ingenuity on the point,[2] according to which it is the first Sabbath after the second Easter-day that is meant, σάββατον πρῶτον ἀπὸ τῆς δευτέρας τοῦ Πάσχα, because from this day seven Sabbaths were reckoned to the Pentecost. (Lev. xxiii. 10—16). This would also be the time that corresponds best with the plucking the ears of corn. Only, we cannot yet herewith decidedly dismiss the really very plausible statement in Bengel's *Ordo temporum*. This, first of all, connects itself quite as simply with the most ancient interpreta-

[1] As if some one had added δευτέρῳ to πρώτῳ as a gloss, and from this the monster had arisen—a groundless conjecture!

[2] Grotius and Pareau: the σάββατα which followed the great festivals were πρῶτα, or distinguished above the rest, or great (John xix. 31), here, therefore, the second of these three great ones, the Sabbath after Pentecost; which, however, seems too late a period. Capellus and Rhenferd: there were two πρῶτα at the beginning of the civil and ecclesiastical year. Wetstein: δευτερόπρωτον, דְּרִאשׁוֹן שַׁבַּשֵּׁנִי, the first Sabbath of the second month, on which, in the *section* (Lev. xxi. —xxv.) the shew bread also occurred. Hitzig: according to Lev. xxiii. 11, precisely the 15th of Nisan. Wieseler: the first of the seven first Sabbaths in the great week of years which forms the Sabbath-year.

tion of the Church fathers (Chrys. and Theophyl.), respecting the coincidence of a Sabbath either immediately going before or coming after any new moon or feast day, which was generally called also a Sabbath and was observed as such (as the first Easter-day, Lev. xxiii. 11; comp. Ex. xii. 17); he thinks, however, that it is specially the Sabbath *before* the new moon of the month Nisan, fourteen days before the Passover, that is here denoted. (John vi. 4). The so-called Sabbath (feast day) which fell upon the new moon itself, שבת וראש חדש, was called a *σαβ. πρώτου*, or great Sabbath; on the other hand, the foregoing day (on which 1 Sam. xx. 18, ss., had been read) was called שבת מחר חדש *δευτερόπρωτον*,-*δεύτερος* equivalent to *secundarius* (as in *δευτεροδεκάτη* in Jerome, and *δευτερόλεπτα* in Tzezes). True, it may be objected to this, that the plucking the ears of corn must have taken place *after* the waving of the sheaf of the first fruits, for, otherwise, the Pharisees would have found fault with it as contrary to Lev. xxiii. 14, rather than with the violation of the Sabbath in general; still, as Bengel himself remarks, a reply may be found to this in the answer of our Lord to the Pharisees; and the rest of the chronological arrangement as framed by Bengel, as well as the remarkable coincidence, that precisely on this Sabbath 1 Sam. xx. 18, ss., (near to which is the passage here cited by Christ) had been read, will not allow us altogether to dismiss the matter. Partly on account of this circumstance, partly because Lübkert (as also Wieseler) has not thought the great Bengel even worthy of being mentioned, we would have deemed it right, by way of exception, to direct attention to his interpretation. Wieseler's latest hypothesis brings the year-cycle only too surely into the simple statement of Luke, by which, however, nothing has been effected. At all events, the feast mentioned in John v. must be the Purim, which again, however, will not correspond to Bengel's chronology, and the whole subject remains involved in uncertainty. All the more so, as philologically it is impossible even to determine whether *δευτερόπρωτον* means a second following upon a first (as *δευτερόλεπτα* may be interpreted)—or a first of a subordinate rank. We willingly leave the enigma to the learned, although for us also it has in it something attractive.[1]

[1] As a specimen of his time, Roos also could not resist the temptation to dispute the point with the renowned Bengel.

At the time when Jesus went about in all the cities and villages unweariedly to teach, and preach, and heal (chap. ix. 35), it happened also on a certain Sabbath, that His disciples, urged by actual hunger, in walking through the corn fields, began to pluck a few ears and to eat. Innocent conduct in general, expressly allowed by the law (Deut. xxiii. 25), in contradistinction to an act on which any charge of theft might be founded; it is still right and proper to contemplate the gift of God in the harvest that is drawing near, and to taste beforehand a little of the bread which he causes to grow out of the earth. Here Matthew, who must have known the fact best, expressly observes that they had been hungry; which, in following their master, might often occur for an hour or two. But the *Pharisees* (as, since chap. ix. 11, he concisely designates the then representatives of this class of men so hostile to Christ) were also in the neighbourhood, also walking upon the Sabbath; for the ἰδόντες εἶπον is here to be understood more directly than at chap. ix. 11, as is evident from the ἰδοὺ ποιοῦσιν immediately following ἤοξαντο, and afterwards from ver. 9. They went listening beside or behind Christ, and would gladly also have measured after Him whether perhaps He would walk a step beyond the allowed Sabbath-journey. There is no Sabbath stillness in their souls, but they are full of evil purposes to go *their own* ways, to find *their own* desires, and to speak words out of such hearts. (Is. lviii. 13, hebr.). They have no notion of how the disciples walk with Christ, either hearing God's word from his mouth, or silently offering praise in the great temple of creation. Scarcely have the disciples *begun* to pluck a few ears, when they come forward with their *Behold!* as if they had surprised them in a great sin. If Luke gives their words as addressed to the disciples, Matthew certainly gives them more correctly as addressed to the Master: Do *thy disciples* break the Sabbath before thine eyes, and dost thou not rebuke them, that we who are fortunately here must needs interfere? Is this what they learn from Thee? Behold, now, we *see* it! Οὐκ ἔξεστι—so in their foolish pride do they lay down their little statute which had been added to the law of God, and which in reality (according to Maimon. hilchoth Sabb.) forbade[1] the pluck-

[1] Comp. on this Sepp's Leben Christi, ii. 329 and 544.

ing of ears on the Sabbath as a kind of reaping. Oh! how might Christ have replied to these malicious ones otherwise than he did, and in terms befitting their character, sharply rebuking them, and putting them to shame by his powerful censure. But He is now in a Sabbath tone of mind, to which that would not be suitable. He does not let Himself be drawn into the petty school question as to what the מְלָאכָה which was forbidden on the Sabbath, means, and whether the plucking of a few ears (or, the rubbing them also with the hands as Luke adds), belongs to it, although, indeed, it only corresponded to the cutting and helping oneself to meat on the Sabbath (which belonged to the meal, see Ex. xii. 16). No, he kindly recompenses good for evil, overcomes their folly with a genuine Sabbath-word of his own wisdom, and almost obtrudes upon them the unwished-for salutary doctrine in opposition to their whole Pharisaism, the great doctrine respecting the significance, limits, ground and purpose of every law relating immediately to outward acts, even in the case of that law having been given by God.

Vers. 3, 4. Inasmuch as these Pharisees, with all their looking, had yet hastily overlooked the one circumstance which belonged to the *species facti*, Christ fulfils all righteousness, and mentions forthwith the fact that they were hungry, which had not been unperceived by Him in the disciples, and which now on reflection he even feels in Himself; for he says, at first indirectly, adducing the similar conduct of David, "when he and they who were with him hungered," in no other than a humble spirit, "I and they who are with Me are also hungry." The τί ἐποίησε Δαυὶδ thus comes in direct opposition to the ποιοῦσιν of the accusation as a suitable reply. Have you not *read* this? Often enough, indeed, but they have never read it aright, never understood it. In Luke οὐδὲ τοῦτο—nor this *also*—might point in general to their being much read in the Scriptures, but if, according to Bengel, 1 Sam. 20 had really been the portion read on this Sabbath, it might also be a request that they should call to their recollection a chapter further on in the history of David. In this case, it would be a delicate hint, of how accurately Christ observed the arrangements respecting the reading of the Scriptures in the synagogue. Mark has, in addition to the citation, the difficult phrase ἐπὶ Ἀβιάθαρ, which can scarcely have been

added by a later hand, and which deserves a word or two of explanation, inasmuch as it has been likewise of importance to those commentators who are ever on the alert for difficulties and mistakes on the part of the disciples of Christ. The priest named in 1. Sam., is called Ahimelech, son of Ahitob (chap. xxii. 11), but his son was Abiathar (chap. xxii. 20), and his father may also have been called Abiathar (which almost corresponds to the meaning of Ahitob), if it is the same that is spoken of in 2 Sam. viii. 17. Nay, he may have been called Ahimelech as well as Abiathar, see 1 Chron. xv. 11, comp. with xviii. 16, xxiv. 6. In short, as often happens, the names are used interchangeably with each other, and it is quite possible that both father and son may have had both names. The ἐπί denotes the time when the high priest flourished and held office (Luke iii. 2; iv. 27), and which of the two was priest or high priest, is also a question which cannot be determined. Consequently it is not at all necessary to suppose an unscrupulous change of the name in Mark, but either the time of David and that of the high priest Abiathar (who soon succeeded his deceased father), belong in general to the same chronological epoch, or the Ahimelech who gave the show bread was himself also Abiathar. But enough on subordinate points, and now to the matter itself.

You will not think of finding fault by your οὐκ ἔξεστι with what King David did, he whom ye laud so much? That David, although he came at first alone (1. Sam. xxi. 1), yet desired the bread, at the same time, for the young men who were with him and who had been "appointed to such and such a place" (Mark and Luke), is evident in the history when attentively read (see there vers. 4, 5); the necessity of hunger is so naturally presupposed in the whole narrative that it is for this very reason not expressly named; finally, the going into the house of God, the tabernacle at Nob, follows from vers. 7 and 9. See how carefully Christ reads the narratives of the Scriptures, and how he has them every moment as it were present to his mind! R. D. Kimchi on 1 Sam. xxi. also expressly understands David's words: כִּי רְעֵבִים אֲנָחְנוּ, and treats with great fulness of this remarkable incident, on account of the show bread, and also of its happening to be the *Sabbath* when the fresh supply was laid out, as well as on account of David's journey on the Sabbath. It is a rabbini-

cal rule which is also applied to this instance: danger of life displaces the Sabbath: (שמפקק פשות רוח השבת)—and the Talmud expressly enjoins that even on the great day of atonement it is lawful, in the absence of pure meat, to give forbidden nourishment to a man overtaken with weakness or extreme hunger. Nor do we read further on in the Scripture, that the listening calumniator Doeg or the angry Saul afterwards made an accusation *of this*, that the bread which had been given was holy, and what David says (chap. xxi. 5) contains an assertion and doctrine very clearly justifying what he had done.[1] Christ, therefore, by the οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε completely refutes the Pharisees *e concessis;* here was a stronger οὐκ ἐξὸν, that of a *divine* command for the house and sanctuary of God, than your statute which you have brought against us—will you find fault now with the king and the priest?

Ver. 5. *Or*, letting alone what these two did once from special warrant, and in an exceptional case, will you rather abide by the rule of the *law?* Well then, not merely does the sacred *history* relate exceptional instances of *necessity*, but the *law* itself ordains labour on the Sabbath as a *duty*. Thus Christ takes a step higher, from the particular instances with which the doctrine was connected to the development of the general doctrine: That the mere outward working or not working, without farther reference and significance, can never have been the aim of the divine commandment respecting the Sabbath. For, as Scripture proves, there are exceptions to all external law, of whatever kind it be; in the first place, allowed exceptions of *necessity* (which general idea is expressed in Mark by the χρείαν ἔσχε), then, even commanded exceptions of *duty*. The first example has respect to the disciples having eaten (containing a reply at the same time to the charge which the Pharisees had only forgotten to bring against them, of eating before the first fruits were waved), the second more especially to the *breaking of the Sabbath*. The first is taken from the life of the anointed King, the other is from the office and law of the *priests* (already named in the first); for He who now justifies Himself is King and

[1] In which Melancthon loci, p. 137, ed. Aug. finds the same thing already expressed as Paul says in Tit. i. 15.

Priest in the highest sense. The laying out of the shew-bread which has just been mentioned in the house of God, then the offering of the double sacrifice on the Sabbath (Num. xxviii., xxix.), to which belongs the kindling of the fire, otherwise forbidden in houses (Ex. xxxv. 3; Lev. vi. 12), and the whole Temple service in general has to be performed by the priests in the temple on the Sabbath. This then would be a very grievous profanation (βεβηλοῦν Ex. xxxi. 14; 1 Macc. ii. 34), as Christ here expresses himself, with somewhat of irony, in order immediately to refute, it in the ἀναίτιοί εἰσι. For this, also, there are Rabbinical sayings: In the sanctuary there is no Sabbath (אין שבת במקדש); the killing of sacrifices displaces the Sabbath (דוחה שחטה את השבת). The internal truth, however, to which Christ here points, in a different spirit from the Rabbinical, is none other than that *to work the works of God* belongs to every place and time, and is rather the true priestly sanctification of the Sabbath and the sanctuary; for, as at another time, on a like charge being brought against him, he rises still higher, God Himself works always on the great Sabbath after the creation of the world (John v. 17).

Ver. 6. To all this Christ now adds a word pointing to the dignity of his own person (chap. xvii. 25, 26), in virtue of which he is *entirely*, and with the *highest* right of freedom, exempted from outward law, and thereby preparing the way for the conclusion of the address (ver. 8). He expresses this, however, not by the direct form ἐγώ εἰμι, but again, by the modest form of the third person; *here* is one greater than the Temple. The reading of the neuter μεῖζον (which Neander still prefers) would only say: here something is reckoned greater, more important, namely, compassionate regard to the hungry, or, however, it may be stated;[1] but we cannot regard this as anything else than a false correction, as the comparison with the Temple instead of the Temple service would in this case be not very suitable, while, on the other hand vers. 6 and 8 exactly correspond to each other if Christ speaks of Himself. As the Sabbath gives place to the

[1] According to De Wette, the Messianic work. Neander at least is for referring it to the "manifestation of Christ as a whole" (as πλείον Luke ii. 31, 32)—to which we afterwards also take objection.

Temple, so Sabbath and Temple give place to the greater, the Lord of the Temple and Sabbath. He reminds the Pharisees of the enigmatic word (John ii. 19), with which they would certainly be familiar, as also of Mal. iii. 1, and thereby declares again in his own manner who He is—the Messiah, the true King David, the true High Priest, Himself the archetype and Lord of the Temple. His disciples, too, who have left house and goods for His service, that they might follow Him, are collectively priests in the sanctuary, consecrated by him, just as David's companions in his lowly condition were by the already anointed King. This accessory idea unites the whole, and leads over to what follows.

Ver. 7. Christ, who is prepared at the moment for a complete reply to the charge of the Pharisees, adduces the testimony of *history*, the *law*, and the *prophets* against them. If history and law have already spoken of *particular cases of exception*, he now shows, secondly, how the prophetical Scripture opens up the *general* import, and the true spirit of the outward law. It is a passage already brought before the Pharisees in chap. ix. 13, but which he here again submits for their consideration, while he imparts to his address a severer form than hitherto, rebuking their ignorance, and therefore the sin committed *on their part*: If ye had understood this, ye would not have so uncharitably found fault with the innocent. On the import of the citation from Hosea we have already spoken at length in chap. ix., and we find here also (in opposition to almost all commentators), as connected with the main preceding sentiments, the compassion of God towards men, who willeth not that any one should hunger in order that a sacrificial or Sabbath service may be rendered to Him, a service in which He can have no pleasure when it goes against the love that springs from His love. The fundamental idea is certainly also expressed here, namely, that the design of the *Sabbath*, as of the *sacrifice*, is not that men should do or bring something meritorious; but that God may show favour, and impart blessing to us. But there is here to be added to this the natural *inference* and *application* that the compassionate One who makes all his laws and ordinances only *for the sake of man*, will have them observed in no other spirit, in no way contrary to compassion. Somewhat similar, therefore, to chap. xxiii. 23. It

follows, therefore, although it is *not merely* this that is intended to be literally said,[1] that in cases of collision, the royal law of love, from which alone all commandments take their rise, is superior to a Pharisaic outward adherence to the *letter* of *particular* commandments.[2] Thus the disciples, on this occasion, in their holy simplicity (as *blameless* as the priests in the Temple) had no thought, when they plucked the ears of corn, about whether it was allowed or forbidden; their accusers, however, "by condemning the innocent," became themselves very guilty (ver. 8). Christ concludes, *thirdly*, with a doctrine of far-reaching import, which indeed returns to the case of Sabbath-breaking now on hand, in order to draw the conclusive inference with respect to it, but which, at the same time, enlarges, almost transfigures, what is special in it. He utters, in His overflowing wisdom, which He will not and cannot restrain, a sublime truth in addition to ver. 6, and still more enigmatic, the meaning of which those Pharisees could not apprehend; therefore we, for whom it has been written, are to understand it. For the saying that "what a prophet speaks in the wind posterity reads," finds its highest application in Christ.[3]

First of all, we must entirely set aside all those commentators who, misled by the intermediate sentence in Mark (of which we shall presently speak more particularly) are for understanding by ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, בֶּן־הָאָדָם with the article in this instance, *man* in general.[4] This would be contrary to the sense in which the expression is everywhere used by Christ, who always designates by the "Son of Man" only Himself, while, in addition to this, the designation κύριος τοῦ σαββάτου belongs to the same person who was just before said to be τοῦ ἱεροῦ

[1] As von Gerlach, along with the great majority of commentators: That the entire "ritual law" is to be subservient to the supreme "law of love." So formal a distinction is in general foreign to the Old Testament, and least of all does it lie in the genuine sense and connection of the prophetic passage which Christ brings to bear on the subject.

[2] Which might also be applied with equal force to so-called moral duties.

[3] In Knapp's Christoterpe 1838. Funken vom Leuchter (von J. Fr. v. Meyer)—would that in our time also they might fall into many hearts for their illumination.

[4] Kleuker emphatically refutes this, Bibl. Sympathien, p. 318.

μείζων. But do we not read in Mark an intermediate clause of a highly original character, which it is impossible to regard as spurious, and which speaks of ὁ ἄνθρωπος quite generally? How does this agree with our interpretation of the passage before us? Well enough; and neither are those right who, in the address which is *fully* recorded by Mark, understand Christ as speaking only of man, so that ver. 23 also must be interpreted according to that view; nor those, on the other hand, who understand it only of the person of the one "Son of Man;" the two opinions about which commentators differ harmonize when we go somewhat deeper. Why is Christ called the Son of Man, but just because he represents humanity as a whole—because, as a second Adam, He *bears in Himself and sets up a new humanity?* This is the key to the whole statement, according to which, in the first place, Mark ii. 27, as the words stand, contains a truth as profound as it is simple. So in the Talmud, R. Jonathan says literally: The Sabbath is in your hands, not you in its hands, for it is said: "The Sabbath is for you." (Ex. xvi. 29; Isa. xx. 12.) It is, according to God's design, an ordinance and institution of mercy for the good of man, appointed, in the first instance, for rest and refreshment (Deut. v. 14; Ex. xxiii. 12), and then, further, for blessing and sanctification. This, too, is the real ground of that question, which Christ addressed to the Pharisees eight days afterwards, whether one should save life or destroy it on the Sabbath? (Mark iii. 4.) While the Pharisees, cleaving to their statutes, scarcely rose to the level of Moses' law, and knew not at all properly what or wherefore the Sabbath was, Christ here points them to the first and deepest ground and origin of it, opens up to them the fact that the rest of the Creator on the seventh day was a *typical* rest for man, and the blessing of the day a *boon* for man. True it is, on the other hand, that man, as also the whole world, has been created for God and for the promotion of His honour; but the honour of God does not demand an outward work-service in which man may bring a gift and offering to God, for God wills to bless, give, and gladden also by the Sabbath—so that to inflict pain upon a man, and, for example, to let him hunger on account of the external so-called Sabbath, runs directly counter to the internal nature of the Sabbath. But while Christ, who gives forth His doctrines, as

Moses gave the laws in the wilderness, as they were called forth by the various occasions of life, here specifies the Sabbath, He at the same time speaks by synecdoche of all law and its institution in general; His statement means, as we read also in 2 Macc. v. 19, of the Temple which has just been named here: "God has not chosen the people on account of the place, but the place on account of the people." The import and order of his reasoning is therefore very evident, inasmuch as He rises from man in general and the ordinance hitherto in existence, which dates from the first ἐγένετο to Himself, the Son of man, who, moreover, introduces a new state of things to men. *First proposition*: Already in general in the Old Testament law, nay, from the creation downwards, the Sabbath, like every ordinance of God, is designed *for man;* for which as yet general doctrine, after *adducing the testimony* of history, law and prophets, He, in an *allusion* to the book of Maccabees, even goes beyond the canon pointing to the echoes of the prophetical, and foreshadowings of the New Testament doctrine to be found in the apochryphal writings. *Second proposition:* Therefore (Mark ὥστε): *I, as the Son of Man*, being already as man, in the state of things which has existed hitherto, no *servant* of the Sabbath according to your perverted ideas, and, moreover, being *greater than the Temple* in the *new state of things* which begins with my coming, am much more abundantly *Lord* of the Sabbath.[1] Upon which the address closes again, with directest application to the case in hand.

That a complete reply may be given to the charge in ver. 2, *Behold thy disciples do*, &c., he now includes in this his prerogative and freedom *those who are with him.* The Son of Man, *i.e.*, the new man in Christ, the second Adam, in the new order of things, in which all preparatory institutions were fulfilled according to their original significance. Not we as men, as we are, are called lords of the Sabbath; for, although the Sabbath is made on our account, we are yet only so much the more for this reason bound and obliged to keep it. But Christ,

[1] The whole discourse is pervaded by *personality*, that of man in general, of the *Son of man* as representing humanity and raising it to a new elevation. This view closing at last with the κύριος corresponds very ill with the indefinite sentiment, Here is *something greater* than the Temple! as Neander would explain it.

also the Lord of the Sabbath in the proper sense, *in so far* as in honour of Him, the eternal Son of God, every Sabbath from the beginning has been celebrated, brings as the Son of Man to us, his brethren and members, that freedom and lordship through which, in the New Testament, every one is in Christ exalted above all imposed law as such, because he fulfils it not in the bondage of the letter, but in the liberty of the Spirit. In these words of Christ there lies certainly the germ of that apostolical doctrine which we find afterwards expressed in Rom. xiv. 5, v. 17; Col. ii. 16, 17. Does it follow, therefore, that they declare a complete *abrogation* of the Sabbath as a day consecrated by God for man, above other days, and set apart for special blessing? By no means, and those who can find no Sabbath in the New Testament understand neither that apostolical doctrine nor the statement of our Lord in this passage. Not by doing away with the Sabbath, but by bringing it to mind and glorifying it, does he show Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath. We find here rather the most emphatic confirmation of the inviolably continuing σάββατον in the all-expressive ἐγένετο. Not: Moses has given you the Sabbath—but the Sabbath *has been* from the first, when all things came into being, when the world and *man* were created. As already in the reception of this commandment into the decalogue, which contains only what is original and permanent law for all men, not what was temporarily designed for Israel alone, so again does Christ, in the words διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, set forth the universal validity of the Sabbath originating from the creation. (Not like the Temple, only on account of the Israelitish people). So long as man lives on the earth he is to have a Sabbath of God; the necessity of his nature and the ordinance of the Creator for meeting that necessity always correspond to each other. But in this has Christ shown Himself to be Lord of the Sabbath for His church, for the new humanity in Him, that He has changed the day from the *end* of the old world week which passed away for ever with the still Sabbath of His grave, to the *beginning* with which an entirely new state of things commenced, and thus has made the day peculiarly His own, the *Lord's* day, and has united to the remembrance of the first creation, whose Sabbath was broken and rendered servile by sin, the praise of the new creation, effected by Him who became a son of man for man's

sake. Thus has He given to us the Sabbath anew, without literal commandment, as in the Old Testament, but by the free operation of the Spirit in the Church, so that even no defect of knowledge in this particular, no error of church doctrine has as yet been able to deprive of its day of the Lord.[1] Thus do we, sanctifying the Sabbath in Christ, now look freely and joyfully forward to the future σαββατισμός (Heb. iv. 19), in which the rest of God in man from the redemption-work will unite with the first rest from the creation-work; on the other hand, before the appearing of Christ, the best Sabbath devotion could only point backward in humility and repentance, because of sin, to the lost peace of the Sabbaths of Adam in Paradise.

THE WITHERED HAND. IS IT LAWFUL TO DO GOOD OR TO DO EVIL ON THE SABBATH?

Matt. xii. 11—13; Mark iii. 3—5; Luke vi. 8—10.

From the frequency with which the *Sabbath* is spoken of in the Gospels, as it is here again, we may infer the importance of this subject: for, even in the narrow misconceptions of the pharisaical Jews, there yet lies hid the truth that the Sabbath which was given to them had something great and specially holy belonging to it. In all the discourses of Christ on the subject, directed against Pharisaism, we yet look in vain for an expression in which it is distinctly stated that at any period all days are to become alike; if the one which we have just considered contains no such statement, so neither does any other.

According to the account of Matthew, who is very careless as to the order of time, we might suppose that what follows here took place on the same day, did not Luke specify another, and, in all probability the next, Sabbath. Then, as always, Christ sanctifies the Sabbath by going to the synagogue, then also the Pharisees begin to watch him anew, and he again, according to Luke xiv. 13—6, instructs and confounds them in quite a

[1] We rather find that, under the pressure of necessity, the divine right of the new Sabbath is being ever more fully demonstrated theoretically; to promote which, church days, prize writings, societies, are useful, although not yet on a perfectly clear principle.

similar way. If we had not in Luke chap. vi. (as also again in chap. xiii. 15 the same statement) the account corresponding to that of Matthew, how would the critics have spoken of the different report of evidently the same occurrence!

In the first account, also, we find the difference, that, according to Mark and Luke, Christ himself addresses the question which Matthew puts into the mouth of his enemies. Luke observes, besides, that Jesus knew *their thoughts*, and anticipated the question of their hearts, by giving outward expression to it: ἐπερωτήσω ὑμᾶς, I will ask *you*, with which—probably more correctly, for then the account in Mark and Luke (the interrogative ἔξεστι without τί) becomes the same—is to be construed: ἐπερωτήσω ὑμᾶς τι, I will ask you *something*, as in Matt. xxii. 24, ἕνα λόγον. It is the same as in the case of the centurion's speaking (Math. viii.), and Matthew represents as an expressed question, in the same manner as he does there, the διαλογισμούς of those who watched *whether he would heal on the Sabbath.*[1]

Mark and Luke narrate exactly that Christ, at first acting with perfect frankness, and in order to put it to the proof whether hostile stubbornness will yield to sympathy with the unfortunate, called him forth: *Come forth and stand in the midst!* Now is the disputed case before their eyes, itself speaking and testifying to the unprejudiced; now goes forth the bold, irresistibly pressing question, to which the obdurate Pharisees had nothing to answer. He humbly sets them up as judges, while in the exalted dignity of simple, invincible truth, he puts their folly and wickedness to shame. Do you yourselves give forth your ἔξεστι on the case, so that I may act accordingly: Shall I now heal the man, or, because it is the Sabbath, shall I not? This, however, he expresses forcibly: Is it *permitted* or right *to do good* on the Sabbath, *or to do evil.* The answer is, of course, self-evident, and it is also so for the next part of the question, which comes nearer the case in hand: *to save a life* (ψυχήν quite indefinite, a living being) *or to destroy it?* Even yet the question represents the case in a generalized form, but it does represent it in so far as *healing* is a σῶσαι, a *saving and*

[1] Ἀπολέσαι in Luke, at all events the more correct explanation for ἀποκτεῖναι. Should the latter be genuine in Mark, it would not do to say that it does not belong to ψυχήν, but stands by itself in opposition to ψυχὴν σῶσαι.

restoring of the life-power or health, while, on the contrary, *not* healing when one has the power is an *ἀπολέσαι*, as every omission of *well-doing* on any occasion presented to us is *evil-doing*. Thus does Christ, with simple decision, reduce all the complication belonging to the disputed questions as to what is or is not to be done on the Sabbath, to the highest clear law: Thou shalt not do evil, thou shalt not hurt thy neighbour even by the refusal of helping love. With considerable irony Christ thus shuts up the disputers to the conviction, that doing good must be lawful also on the Sabbath, but that *doing evil*, that is, precisely their pharisaical keeping of the Sabbath, is by no means so. Upon this follows what Matthew alone further narrates as Christ's discourse.

Ver. 11, 12. In these verses he discovers the unfeeling nature of their evil thoughts, and shews that what men will not do from *love* is done from *self-interest*; for, although Christ speaks on the friendly supposition that a man will save the life of the poor sheep, and how much more render assistance to a man—yet, properly speaking, he presupposes the answer in the hearts of those whom he has put to shame: "Yes, we would do that in order not to suffer loss in our property!" Hence he gives emphasis to *ὃς ἕξει πρόβατον ἕν*. Accidents of this kind with sheep, oxen, or asses, must at that time have been acknowledged exceptions; not till a later period do we find even this forbidden in the Talmud, perhaps, not without occasion from the words of Jesus. Whenever Pharisees forbid works of love towards our neighbour as unlawful, let them be put to shame by presenting an analogous case, in which their own profit or loss is at stake! —And now again with reproachful severity comes the benevolent conclusion from the Saviour-heart of the Son of Man: How much better is *a man* than a sheep! Thus speaks the love of God which compassionates all men, and will assist their distress in body and in soul. By how much the man is better, by so much the less is his health, the healing of a diseased limb, to be placed in comparison with the saving of a perishing animal. Consequently it is indeed *lawful* to do good on the Sabbath—whereupon the words in Matthew point back to what goes before in Mark and Luke. We are certainly not, however, to confine the application of this to bodily benefactions, and the saving of life, for how much better is the *soul* of the man than

the body. Works of soul-healing, soul-saving, alone reach the man properly so-called; hence all the present operations of the Home Mission which have the object of drawing men out of the pit of perdition are, in the truest sense, a Sabbath work.

Ver. 13. Who has anything to say against my doing good now to this man? Thus does Christ look around, again asking, and —oh, the gentleness and kindness—would have still waited to answer any word that might be addressed to him. But he knew, at the same time, that they would be silent with the mouth, and yet would hate him more bitterly in their obdurate hearts because of the truth; hence (according to Mark), the holy anger which he manifests at the same time that he humbly puts the question,—anger, which is the same thing with grief, at sin. They are silent. Upon this he did not touch the sick man, did not even stretch out his hand, that he might certainly do no external work on the Sabbath, but spake the words (as all the three evangelists agree) *Stretch forth thine hand!* That is, as much as to say: Thou *canst* do this, thou *art* freed from thy malady (Luke xiii. 12). And behold, he could do it; it became, in the act of stretching it out, whole as the other. (1 Kings xiii. 6). The miraculous cure, which we might expect to be performed after the hand was stretched out, *was already done* in "the speediest and most spiritual manner"—as Lange expresses it.

BEELZEBUB. CHRIST DEFENDS HIMSELF AGAINST THE CHARGE OF BEING IN FELLOWSHIP WITH SATAN.

(Matth. xii. 25—45; Mark iii. 23—29; Luke xi. 17—36).

It is a question, and one which must find its answer in a harmony of the Gospels, whether the occurrence here related by Matthew, as connected with what immediately precedes, belongs to the later period, which Luke seems to assign to it, since the identity of all the particular parts of the discourse, which are as strongly marked as they are closely connected, is too great in this case to admit the supposition of a repetition.[1] But whether

[1] Alford says very strongly in opposition to Greswell, who maintains such a twofold occurrence of the same discourse, that upon such

the sequence of the particulars, as given by Luke (who not only first introduces Math. vers. 31, 32 at chap. xii. 10, and omits Matth. vers. 33—37, because he had already given something of this in chap. vi.; but also connects the parable which, in Matthew forms the conclusion with the beginning, and gives a different conclusion) whether this arrangement in which he deviates from Matthew be the *more correct*, we very much doubt: for, in the connexion of the longer discourses, Matthew is generally the more exact. Christ has healed a demoniac whom the Devil made blind and deaf, which circumstance, as giving occasion to the discourse,[1] Mark does not at all mention, while Luke mentions only the dumbness. *Κωφός* signifies deaf as well as dumb, (comp. Matth. ii. 5). This striking double cure draws from the astonished people the bold and open question: Is not this indeed the Messiah? Who will now contradict it any longer? The Pharisees feel themselves challenged by the question to come forward, and, according to Mark, they are Pharisees who had come down from Jerusalem, who think it necessary to show their superiority to others in learning. The fact stands clear before their eyes; the powerful conclusion, however, which the simple popular understanding draws from it, must, on no account, be held good. Thus it is as if the cast out devil had just entered into them, to make them blind with a more wicked blindness, and from being a dumb devil had, for a change, become one speaking blasphemously. Here, probably, these Pharisees say for the first time what, according to Matthew ix. 34, on a similar (later) occurrence was impudently repeated, by them in a short form. They maintain it, however, at once openly, emphatically, quickly replying with their contemptuous *οὗτος* to the wondering *οὗτος* of the people; nay, they give forth as masters of the faculty a most strongly affirmative judgment: This man doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub; *εἰ μὴ*, it is no otherwise, *we know it!*[2] That is more than the *δαιμόνιον*

principles it would be quite as easy to prove that there took place four different crucifixions and resurrections.

[1] Who perhaps might confound it with Matth. ix. 33, 34.

[2] Beelzebub (God of flies) a mocking euphemism for Beelzebub, *i.e.*, lord of the dwelling, not, however, of the possessed as being inhabited by demons, as some have thought, but Ruler of the abyss, Prince of Hades.

ἔχει chap. xi. 18; John vii. 20, viii. 48, x. 20). He has not merely a devil, but Satan himself, the prince of the devils (Mark βεελζεβοὺλ ἔχει), he is the wickedest *conjuror*. They not only think this blasphemous thought, but speak it, or rather they thrust it forward without even themselves truly thinking it; finally, they do this as the leaders of this people! and, with this clenching word as by a master-stroke, the whole subject of the source of His miracles is to be for ever set at rest, the power of God in them set aside, the people, who were disposed to believe, rather led to cherish the deepest contempt for Christ, horror towards the ally of Satan! Here it was necessary for Christ to *speak*, and truly He speaks as the Lord. But He *speaks* only, He does no new miracles either to prove His dignity in an overpowering manner (see afterwards vers. 39, 38), or even to rebuke the wicked blasphemers, and to make them dumb. All those qualities that we have hitherto admired in His discourses and answers are found united here: the gentleness and humility which no personal offence, not even the most wicked reviling, can provoke; the uniformly lofty, calm temper which returns not reviling for reviling, but can rise from the most patient testifying for the truth to the rebuke of insolent unbelief; the holy judicial anger in harmony with love which teaches and persuades in circumstances in which every other would have thought it unsuitable and useless; the immoveable certainty and clearness of His position in relation to the sin of man and the kingdom of the Devil; the fulness of wisdom which, on every occasion, at once reaches forth from its deep treasures that which surveys the present, the past, and the future, which lets us see into the Scripture, which reveals the secrets of hearts, the judgments of history even to the last judgment, and then, again, in the most familiar and persuasive address by parable and proverb, declares the truth with an all-subduing, penetrating power; finally, the majesty and singularity of his person, which must attest itself in everything, which never can nor will deny itself. Let any one study thoroughly this one discourse, and say whether any other but the Son of God in the flesh could so speak, whether any one among men could either consciously or unconsciously fabricate anything like this!

It is again really *one discourse* which Matthew gives us; the interrupting challenge addressed to Him (ver. 38), is replied to

by Christ, only by a continuation of the sentiments he had just been expressing. *He defends Himself against the charge of confederacy with Satan*, by adducing first of all most conclusive proof against such a charge (on to ver. 36), from this He rises higher, and rebukes those who insolently set aside what He thus proved, and this is the main idea of what is said on to ver. 45. Here also He at first *warns* against the highest, the unpardonable sin, which the Pharisees at that time were in a fair way to commit; then He *threatens* more decidedly the entire *perdition* which will assuredly follow it. The former embraces vers. 31—37, and had already, at the conclusion, pointed to the *judgment*, when the repeated defying challenge by which He was interrupted gave Him occasion, now prophesying of total unbelief, to carry it out to the highest and last sign.

He does *not at once* rebuke them thus: How unreasonable are your words? how must they, wise as you are, proceed from bad hearts, from wicked lying against the truth! He does not begin with the deserved rebuke which they had afterwards to take before the whole people (ver. 34), but from a calm elevation, as if it were a friendly discussion upon a subject not at all affecting His own person, He *begins* with a few plain and undeniably stated *general sentences*. These contain the *first ground* of His defence: *Granted*, according to your own words, that *Satan's kingdom* exists, it cannot surely make war upon and overthrow itself. The quite general proposition of every kingdom, city, house, true in the great, the lesser, and the least (ver. 25). Application to Satan's kingdom as deductio *ad absurdum* (ver. 26). Then comes the *second reason* from the other side, which more nearly touches the disputed case, and in which He declares what they conceal, affirms what they knowingly deny: Rather does the *kingdom of God* attest itself by My casting out devils. Here also, with the utmost humility, He first of all classes *Himself* with common examples (ver. 27), in order from the general proposition: *Where Satan yields there God works*, to make the higher application: *The kingdom of God is come* (ver. 28), the conqueror of Satan, the serpent-treader (the Messiah, ver. 23), is virtually present in My person (ver 29). To which is added

(ver. 30), finally, as a transition to the now well-founded rebuke, the proverbial saying sharply distinguishing the two opposing kingdoms, His and Satan's associates.

Christ sees the thoughts of the heart behind the words which were spoken in His presence, a circumstance which the evangelists regularly repeat from time to time, in order to indicate the entire internal suitableness of His answers. Yet, notwithstanding, He Himself also teaches and proves, even when He sees that spiteful wickedness which will not know. How much more ought we who know not the heart to follow His example in this respect; how ought we rather to suppose ignorance which may be helped on the part of those who are hostile, than blasphemy, and not to withhold the salutary doctrine. He who, in the wilderness, gave even to Satan the answer which he would and could never receive, in order to render what was due to him, does the same here, and would have spoken thus even though the wickedness of all who heard Him had been already incorrigible. But this was certainly not yet the case; perhaps in the worst originators of the blasphemy there was still a hidden germ of obedience to the truth, more probably, at least, in the better or less bad among them who *joined in what was said*, as such are wont to do; finally, Christ certainly could not be silent for the sake of the poor deluded people, among whom the worst error, if boldly spoken, will find access. Besides, we are not to suppose that between the truth and the worst denial of it there is no common ground for explanation and defence; there is, and remains, so long as we speak to men, even for the highest truths of the humanly attested kingdom of God, the *common understanding of men* to which the Son of Man here appeals. For where the testimony of the Spirit of God is not listened to, there is always unreason. (Mark vii. 22.)

Ver. 25, 26. Taking up the words of the blasphemers themselves regarding the ἄρχων τῶν δαιμονίων, Christ at once says, *e concessis:* On the existence of a *kingdom* of Satan and the *unity* of it in the one Head, we are agreed! Oh the specious unreason of the vulgar rationalism which could and can speak here of accommodation! With the highest earnestness of truth, even in those places where he maintains it against the worst form of denial, Christ rather confirms the true idea which

His opponents express even to the completest consequence which they do not now perceive. The ground-idea of a *kingdom* is its self-inclosed, firmly-compacted *unity;* by how much it fails in this, by so much it is no kingdom in the strictest sense of the term. A prince who puts down and casts out his own servants and subjects is no prince. While Christ, descending from the great to the small, shows upon the principles of reason and experience that every community is and must be dissolved by being in opposition to itself, He takes it for granted indeed that such a thing *does take place* in *human* societies;[1] so much the weightier is His assertion that there is no such thing as this in Satan's kingdom. The mention of the *house* also, the family, as the smallest society which cannot subsist without unity, is here so natural that there is no necessity to find an occasion for it in the fact that Christ at that moment was teaching in a house (ver. 47; ch. xiii. 1; Mark iii. 20). It is possible, however, that His afterwards carrying out the analogy of the "house" (ver. 29) instead of the kingdom, was occasioned by this circumstance. In Lu. xi. 17 (where the middle member πόλις is wanting), Luther translates wrongly, "And *one* house *falls* upon another in such a kingdom;" it must evidently be construed as already it is in the Syr.: where there is an οἶκος ἐπὶ οἶκον, *i.e.*, a house striving against *itself*, divided against itself, it *falls*, is destroyed. (The family is designated metaphorically by the house in which it dwells). This alone agrees with Matthew, and corresponds to the main idea which runs throughout the passage. Οὐ σταθήσεται equivalent to Mark οὐ δύναται σταθῆναι, in which the passive form[2] is to be particularly noticed: the prince or head of a family will not be able to maintain or preserve his kingdom or house (Lu. xi. 21), if he himself in his place of power encourages division and strife. Then is it true already, and will soon be manifestly so, that it hath an end, as Mark says, in addition. Would that it were so with Satan's kingdom! But Christ, by a valid conclusion drawn backwards from the undeniably ac-

[1] Grotius cites Cicero de amicitia: Quae domus tam stabilis, quae tam firma civitas est, quae non odiis atque dissidiis funditus possit everti?

[2] Ammonius: σταθῆναι μέν ἐστι τὸ ὑφ' ἑτέρου· στῆναι δέ, τὸ κατ' ἰδίαν ῥώμην καὶ προαίρεσιν.

knowledged existence of this kingdom, denies the absurd hypothesis of his opponents, that *Satan casteth out Satan*—as He purposely with emphasis says that Satan attacks *himself* in those who are his, his own sovereign power in his servants and subordinate devils; for then he would, indeed, be at variance with himself; prince and kingdom would not be one perfect unity, as Christ who knew the fact, maintains that they are, and therefore under the name Satan comprehends the closely and firmly united whole.

Here, already, we have a hint which helps us to the understanding of the words which follow in vers. 31, 32, namely, that *human* wickedness is distinguished from *Satanic* by this, that in the former because there is still error, and not an absolutely evil will, there is still division against itself. The kingdom of human sin here upon earth is, as such, in reality a divided falling Babel, in which one sinner is against another, and so the power is broken. But in the *background* of this confused scene, the will, plan, kingdom, and power of Satan stands firm and united: the proof in fact, of such another kingdom being behind all the, in other respects, discordant sin of men lies in the fearful, otherwise inexplicable harmony which appears in this Babel-confusion, whenever it goes against the kingdom of God in Christ. Then must those who in other respects hate and are hostile to each other, become friends and allies, for Satan uses them as his arms and household stuff to accomplish by their means what he will, and well he knows what he will. He will certainly do no hurt, on his part, to even the lowest devil in the host of hell, for the evil counsel and will in the head and in all his spirits is one and the same, which cannot contradict and conflict with itself. It may, indeed, appear in the particular instances, when we look at the human side, as if one devil does cast out another; in reality, however, it is no *expulsion*, but the one devil gives place to the other deliberately and willingly, at the word of command. Beelzebub, or any superior devil, never does from caprice or whim what the powerful ones of the earth so often do, who remove their servants from place to place, in accordance with or against merit,[1] but it is, throughout, the connected plan of one will, one power, in this kingdom. In the

[1] Kleuker, a human essay upon the Son of God and man.

single word: There exists a *kingdom* of Satan—much, everything indeed, is said. Christ, indeed, here (and the entire Scripture almost never), designates Satan a *king*, notwithstanding that he was already a condemned and overthrown usurper (he receives this name elsewhere only in Rev. ix. 11, where the writer speaks metaphorically with a half play upon Prov. xxx. 27, and in Job xviii. 14); yet what is to be understood here is the not to be despised kingly power in this kingdom (hence Jude 9, according to which Satan also belongs to the "dignities," the kings by God's *grace* or *righteousness*), and there are even *thrones* of Satan set up in particular places. (Rev. ii. 13).

Ver. 27. Christ meekly and humbly, without the least personal pride that shrunk from it, or personal anger that was provoked by it, takes into his mouth all the contempt and blasphemy directed against Himself, even the most horrible part of it, that which charges Him, the Holy One of God, with being an ally of Satan. He speaks in order to refute it, as if he were bound to defend Himself against it, and thus assumes the monstrous hypothesis: *If I cast out* devils by Beelzebub,—in this form, willingly accepting the concession, that he actually casts out devils, and thereby, first of all, condescends to place himself on a level with every other Jewish exorcist, in order to claim for himself at least what they concede to *their children*; the casting out of devils is in every case done only from a good, a divine power. It is a humble, concessionary analogy of the same kind as John x. 34—36. Nay, he shows even a *kindly* feeling in this, pointing to something good in the Pharisees by bringing into notice their acts which were wrought in God. You so thoroughly despise me that you cast me out to Beelzebub; I willingly give credit to the Pharisees for what they perform in faith in the name of God. For nothing is said here of those who cast out devils in the name of *Jesus* (Mark ix. 38), as, in this case, the conclusion from them to himself, which forms the principal idea of the inference would be lost; because the Pharisees would by no means in such cases allow any authority to the name of Jesus. That Christ means his own disciples and apostles (chap. x. 8), among whom, moreover, there could scarcely be a disciple of the Pharisees, can be the opinion of only commentators who read altogether without reflection, or of timorous ones who, according to

their somewhat narrow theory, cannot allow that there was any casting out of devils in Israel besides that which was done by Christ (among whom Chrysostom leads the way). The *ὑμῶν* stands in direct opposition to him and all his, and the *υἱοί* denotes also not Jews in general (Jewish exorcists, Acts xix. 13, your fellow-countrymen, this would be *ἀδελφοί*), but nothing else than *disciples* of the Pharisees, Acts xxiii. 6.[1]

If their casting out of devils had been a mere delusion and superstition, then indeed Christ with all His humility, could not for the sake of truth have placed His own on a level with it, could not have appealed to it as a fact for their conviction as he does in the *ἐκβάλλουσι* of His question, in which He grants that it was a real casting out, quite as true as *His own* *ἐκβάλλω*.[2] We leave undecided in what relation this may have stood to the *τρόποις ἐξορκώσεων* which, according to Joseph. Arch. viii. 21, 5, Solomon is said to have bequeathed to the Jews, the practice of which was at that time also still common; but, if Justin. M. adv. Tryph. p. 311 appeals against the Jews to the fact that devils yielded to the name of the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," as they did to no name of king, prophet, and patriarch—

[1] Even if the discipleship had not much significance in other respects still the Pharisees certainly appropriated those exorcists to themselves and their party, appealing thereto against the Sadducees. Accordingly V. Gerlach's question is very much out of place, "How can we know that these were disciples of the *Pharisees?*" The Sadducees admitted the existence of no spirits whatever! Nor is it *arts learned* in the schools of the Pharisees, whereby devils were actually cast out that are here spoken of—but the believing work of orthodox Jews, which however, was of rare occurrence, so as not in any way to hinder the astonishment at the totally different power of Jesus.

[2] Unaccountably wrong and yielding to a preconceived opinion is Menken, who understands Christ to refer to the most worthless jugglers and to say, "Such hateful and impure conduct do ye allow to pass without question and call it divine? There rather are the marks of what is evil and devilish! But I cast out without profit, out of love, without means and formulas; this pure divine work is forsooth from Beelzebub, and that which really proceeds from him is divine!" Such an interpretation is refuted by a right reading of the text. Sepp. indeed brings it forward anew (ii. 362), in his own manner, always hunting after something peculiar and abusing the text itself. Neander, too, cannot reconcile himself to the thing, and calls the plan and concession upon which the whole discourse is built, a supposition *κατ' ἄνθρωπον* —which is retracted afterwards at v. 30.

if Irenaeus, and likewise Origen, acknowledge the still continuing exorcisms of the Jews in the name of God (see the passages in Grotius), we may see with what reason, and in what sense, Christ might ask: ἐν τίνι, by whom, and by whose power, do your disciples cast out devils? Certainly not by Beelzebub, a supposition which he had just refuted as impossible.

Ver. 28. At first He condescendingly places his acts side by side in general with those of these disciples, but now, as was right, he sets the ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω far above any such acts performed by them. Here, first of all, express mention is made of that kingdom which is not merely opposed to the kingdom of Satan but which overcomes it, notwithstanding of all its power and unity, namely, the *kingdom of God*, of the eternally stronger One who everlastingly upholds the kingdom. It is mentioned here in a stricter sense, in so far as it was future for Israel and now visibly come on the earth in their midst. In general, wherever devils are made to yield, there is the kingdom and spirit, or powerful energy of God; but *the* kingdom of God which comes in Christ is something different from what was already among the disciples of the Pharisees, *the* spirit of God by which *He* casts out means something more than what is conceded with regard to them in the ἐν τίνι. Luke says: *by the finger of God*, an expression which Christ in his more detailed discourse probably used along with the other, and which very appropriately points to the history in Ex. viii. 19, where the magicians themselves were constrained to acknowledge by this expression the difference between magic and the miracles of God. Comp. also Ps. viii. 4; Ex. xxxi. 18, whence it came to be a proverbial form of expression that God's *finger* works mightily. That which in Isaiah (after Moses) is called the redeeming *arm* of the Lord, appears here as, so to speak, the but slightly touching finger. Strong emphasis must be laid on the ἐγὼ in this verse, in order to feel the full force of Christ's inference: "I with all that belongs to Me and that goes forth from Me, I with my holy walk and witness for the truth—can signs wrought in support of Beelzebub help *Me*, as I stand before you, My whole teaching and working as these are known to you? Truly, then, He would be, in the strongest possible sense, *against Himself*, and assisting His most decided enemy." Not, therefore, the isolated acts of casting out devils or miraculous

acts as such, but all taken together as attestations, which cannot but come from God, of Him who reveals and declares by His whole being the kingdom of God, prove it beyond contradiction: His word is true, the kingdom *is come!* Ἔφθασεν, as has been observed before, expresses more than ἤγγικεν (chap iv. 17). It has come upon you (2 Cor. x. 14), unexpectedly broken in upon you,[1] already present and attested, since I am here and work. What follows then, further? That in Me, he who was to come is come, the Serpent-bruiser, according to the first and oldest promise, the Conqueror and stronger One, whom the prophets announce under these names—wherewith the discourse passes on to what follows.

Ver. 29. Satan is the *strong* one, but the *stronger* than he, ὁ ἰσχυρότερος, overcomes him. This name is expressed in Luke, and reminds us, at the same time, of the Baptist's word (Luke iii. 16; Matth. iii. 11); for, even in these passages, it is not merely ἰσχυρότερός μου, but there is in the expression a general name by which Christ was distinguished: He who in every comparison is in Himself the stronger, superior to all with Him and against Him, who is and remains the unconditionally strong and mighty One. Perhaps, as has already been observed, Christ expresses Himself in the parable with immediate reference to the *house* in which he is speaking, but, at all events, He speaks from the prophetical writings, as He almost always does when He announces Himself as He who was to come. Not merely does He look back to Gen. iii. 15, but still more definitely does this testimony contain an evident allusion to the subsequent prophecy of Isaiah. When the Lord Himself comes after the voice in the wilderness has prepared the way for Him, he comes as a *strong One* (בְּחָזָק not quite accurately rendered in the Sept. by μετὰ ἰσχύος), and His arm rules, conquers for Him. (Is. xl. 10). This is the general import in which the words of the Baptist and of Christ agree.

The passage Is. liii. 12 comes nearer still to the words of Christ: He shall have the *strong ones* for a prey, bear them off as spoil

[1] Which lies in the ἐφ' ὑμᾶς comp. 1 Thess. ii. 16, hence Wesley in his New Testament quite correctly, "unawares, before you expected, so the word implies." See also Dan. vii. 22. lxx.

(אֶת־עֲצוּמִים certainly the Accus., and again not accurately rendered in the Sept. by *ἰσχυρῶν μεριεῖ σκῦλα)*; where the common superficial interpretation falsely places the great One among other רַבִּים, and represents him as sharing the booty with other strong ones and heroes.[1] Finally, in that most profound passage, Is. xlix. 24, 25, exactly answering to the words of Christ, we find taken out from this indefinite number the one, the *strong one*, whom the Messiah overcomes and spoils. It stands at the beginning, in the first chapter of the third principal part of all Isaiah's prophecies, where, with the greatest of New Testament clearness, the great redemption is represented as a spiritual one, and the preparation of Israel as an implanting into the suffering and glory of the true servant Israel. Here, we find, as a concluding assurance at the end of the chapter, the *question* just as Christ here puts it: Can the prey be taken also from the *strong One* (גִּבּוֹר, Sept. strangely *γίγας*), and the prisoners of the rightful One (צַדִּיק, he, who although a robber, has yet a right of property in them) be delivered? To this is given in answer, the prophetic assurance: Yes, even the prisoners shall be taken from the strong One, and the prey of the usurper (עָרִיץ) shall be set free, be delivered; for I myself will contend with thine adversary (יְרִיבֵךְ, sing.), and *redeem* thy children! It is necessary to look at this passage (which Christ has evidently in view), so thoroughly confused in the LXX., and, carefully to observe, that here a person is mysteriously spoken of who is called both עָרִיץ and צַדִּיק, because he now has in his power, partly by force, partly according to justice, the prisoners whom he has secured as prey, and, for this reason, a process is here spoken of which is to be successfully carried out against this יְרִיב, accuser, Satan.[2] The close connexion between Christ's words,

[1] So also Sack unfortunately, because the present exegesis of the Old Testament imposes on the best. The רַבִּים are the same as in the foregoing verse, only differently understood. (Comp. on account of the ב, Job. xxxix. 17).

[2] Here, then, also we have the true explanation of what the imprisonment (Is. lxi. 1) properly is. Observe, besides, that of *this* tyrant and robber such a thing as saving, converting, gaining cannot be spoken of, but solely of disarming, binding, overcoming.

and those of the prophecy, is expressed most exactly in Luke v. 41, 22, not merely by way of giving more colouring to the parable; if Matthew gives more correctly the connexion of the address as a whole, Luke, on the other hand, has in this particular instance given the original expression. As Paul in Col. ii. 15 refers especially to Is. liii. 12, so here, Christ refers to it and chap. xlix. 24, 25 together. It appears, at first sight, as if he would only give forth a general parable again concerning a strong one, and a stronger one who must overcome him, and this side of his words has been retained by Matthew, in his *πῶς δύναταί τις*. But even Matthew, by the article before *ἰσχυρός*, hints at the proper special sense of the parable, which then in Luke comes fully into view. The *house* or the *αὐλή* of the strong one here spoken of, is the world, whose prince he is called and is, while his *σκεύη*, Hebr. כֵּלִים, in a comprehensive sense are *men*, whom he not merely possesses as house furniture, but even uses as his tools and instruments, his weapons, the same, therefore, as the *σκῦλα* in Luke. These, the robber himself, has already taken by plunder (for the word corresponds, also according to the LXX., to the מַלְקוֹחַ and שָׁלָל in both passages of Isaiah), and now they are to be, as much by right as by force, again taken from him. They are his possession and his property (*ὑπάρχοντα*), and with them he is armed, *καθωπλισμένος*. With these he is proud in his confidence (*ἐπεποίθει*), for, without men as the vessels of his iniquity, he could not reign and work evil upon the earth, but would be the poor naked devil, alone in his dark and long since finished empire of hell. But he shall not keep his *αὐλή* and *παυοπλία* as his anti-paradise, he shall not hold his goods in the false *peace* of his servants, for the Stronger One, the Conqueror, overcomes him, mightily destroying this peace, so that it may become the peace of God, and the strong ones taken from the strong one, He now allots for *his own* service, as *his* well-earned spoil, as his prey of victory and honour in the world. (The *διαδίδωσιν* in Luke again parallel to the יְחַלֵּק in Is. liii. 12). Let any one deny as he may this profound connexion between the prophetical word as also the discourse of Christ, which takes it up, on the one hand, and the most profound fundamental principles of the Bible on the other, in order to reduce

this lofty statement, significant even in the minutest detail, to a general, indefinite parable; let us rather learn here, how the mysteries of the kingdom of God lie everywhere in the background of these parables. Let us further mark what is also said: the Stronger One comes to save only us men, but to drive out and to judge devils for our salvation.

Finally, what is to be understood by the expression, *except he first bind him*, which Matthew and Mark put into Christ's mouth, certainly as a word of peculiar importance? It is the same as ἐπελθὼν νικήσῃ in Luke. This, again, was evidently spoken for Jewish Scribes, since, according to their doctrine, it was expected of the Messiah that He would *bind Satan*,—a true expectation, to which a passage at the end of the Scriptures (Rev. xx. 2) corresponds. The binding is effected by vanquishing, through which his right, and therewith his power, is taken from the עָרִיץ. But what is to be understood by the πρῶτον, upon which alone the καὶ τότε can follow, the binding of the strong man himself by conflict with *him*, ere his house, the world, can be taken as a prey from him, and his σκεύη, σκῦλα, men, wrested from him?[1] Christ means this, we must say, in two senses, the one of which already shadows forth and contains the other. First of all, indeed, the act denoted by the πρῶτον must already have been done, inasmuch as Christ shows Himself to be the Stronger One, by His already casting out devils; this is true, for He came into the world into Satan's house, as He who in Himself was from eternity the Stronger, so that the departure of devils at his word and name, from such as were possessed, was a thing of course. (Luke x. 18). But then this casting out of Satan from those who were bodily possessed, is yet by no means the real overthrow of his work of sin, the real redemption of those who have been under his power (Acts x. 38), but a prophetic figure and pledge of that which was yet to be done. Consequently Christ here predicts, at the same time, the great conflict and victory of his death, and

[1] Almost to the same effect Roos speaks of the *binding* of Satan in himself, that he can no longer use the powers of his angelic nature with such full authority, or such entire might, and the *disarming* him or seizing of something else upon which he relies, with which he covers himself. Only, to the *latter* should not be reckoned the right over men (Is. xlix.), which is no mere "right of war."

his descent into hell (see afterwards ver. 40), the *πρῶτον* of which had already taken place, so that his word, in its deepest and most completely fulfilled sense, is the great text of the Passover discourse. (See John xiv. 30, xii. 31, 32; Heb. ii. 14, 15; Eph. iv. 8—10). Thus has Christ bound the strong one and overcome him, not properly in this his earthly house, but beyond it (as indeed the words affirm, the *πρῶτον* expressly distinguishing from the *εἰσελθεῖν*) in his own most proper domain and province; from that time forth is his house spoiled, and this Christ does now ever more and more by his instruments, by the same whom he has rescued from Satan. Christ, too, will gain for himself an army for this conflict and victory which has been decided from all eternity, but is to be carried out gradually in time until the end of the world, he will gather together vessels for his use and service to build and adorn his house. This is the last point to which the words of Christ, presenting something new from whatever side they are considered, conduct; this is the deeper reason why Christ began thus indefinitely: Can *any one* overcome the strong one? (Mark says *no one* can!) In *his own* strength and might Christ will say, "No one can do this but I, the Stronger One;" *with Me*, in my name, from this time forth all my followers, all who decide for me shall be able to do it.

Ver. 30. Here is another sentence from the holy lips of Christ which, in order to perceive its depth and fulness, might be presented ever anew to the most of believers with a "Go and learn what this meaneth." It is a proverb in use among men, applied to cases and circumstances in which there is no neutrality allowed between the strictest either-or, in which every one is to shew himself, and must shew himself, as *for* or *against*. It is difficult to see how a *Chrysostom* and *Euthymius* should have understood by him who is not with Christ, and is therefore against him, the devil—what a strange statement would this make! Yet many, even to the most recent time, are of opinion that Christ still speaks here of the complete unity of Satan's kingdom; this, however, only gives the point of connexion which lies behind, and what Christ will say is: In the contest between these *two kingdoms* which embraces everything, and out of which nothing is or is done on the earth, your proverb thoroughly holds

good in reference to me, the determined adversary of the adversary, and to those who are mine; we, too, must be firmly united and not at variance among ourselves.[1] In order, however, not to misunderstand the emphatic *with Me*, we must take a look forward to the parallel saying (afterwards to be interpreted)—"He who is not against you is for you." (Mark ix. 40; Luke ix. 50). In this case, the disciples hastily and shortsightedly put their *we* to the *I* of Christ which alones decides: He follows (thee) not with *us*, he follows not *us!* This *outwardly* visible fellowship, founded on the fact of following Christ, must not be the ground of *our* judgment, as if he were not with Christ who casts out devils in his name; humility and love should rather reckon every one a friend who does not declare himself an enemy. *Quilibet praesumitur bonus, donec probetur malus*—this principle in law, so capable of abuse, is yet true here. He who is not with *you* is against you, that is as much as to say against *me—this* Christ will affirm of no visible church of his believing followers whatever, he has not even granted it to the Apostles. He cannot, and will not, thus unite himself along with his followers into an *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* falling under men's judgment, by saying: He who is not with *us* is against us—he rather in that passage places the *you* in opposition to Himself as it was right that he should. But so soon as He, in whose person and fellowship the great alternative presents itself, appears, then, on the other hand, he cannot say: "He who is *not against* me is for me." Precisely in opposition to this mischievous error, which would suppose an impossibility, is the statement which Christ here makes.[2]

That false Gamaliel-prudence thinks that it will save itself:

[1] Neander (following Schleiermacher and others) finds that Christ in this saying also repels the Jewish exorcists as those who cast out devils not with Christ, therefore only seemingly. How one may thus, by the very ingenuity of the expositor, hide from himself the great simple truth! Bengel gave at least a different turn to this view, and read in ver. 30 *e contrario*: "Your disciples are, and gather with me"—which, however, does not in truth belong to this place, and would not be so expressed.

[2] What Elwert and Ullmann have recently said on the relation of the two proverbial sayings, we purpose to consider more particularly in connection with Mark ix. 40, in the second edition.

If only we are not found fighting against God—and leaves the kingdom and work of God to take its course, without helping it by confession or by action, and thereby coming to the knowledge that it is from God. Let the indolent and undecided only not mock, only not persecute, that is thought to count in the meanwhile for something. But this is the middle party of whom Christ knows nothing, and of whom he makes no account, but condemns them and casts them over to his enemies. When Christ spake on this occasion, as generally when He stood testifying of the kingdom of God in Israel, there were before him his *disciples* and his *enemies*, between them the class consisting of the *seemingly* neutral, outwardly undecided: many whom he had healed, who were ashamed to speak against him, although their hearts were not yet for him; many impressed with his preaching, who yet could not get loose from themselves and their position in the world; many stupidly indifferent spectators of his works and listeners to his words. Yet this middle party was not at that time very numerous, and the more powerfully the βιάζεσθαι of the kingdom of God pressed upon them and penetrated within them, it would become always less so; it, even then, became ever more and more a matter of necessity to decide for or against this Jesus of Nazareth, whether he is from God or from the devil, whether he is Christ or a deceiver. In the later periods of the church, on the other hand, the class of people who think themselves, and appear to others to be *not against* him, has become great, and indeed the greatest; it is properly for this state of things in his kingdom that Christ speaks this prophetic sentence of rejection as king and judge.

The "with me," then, means the true *inward* fellowship of the heart, of the will, and therefore also of the life, in confessing Christ and working for him, not the being of any party formed by outward consent and discipleship. It presupposes, certainly, that *He has appeared* with his testimony by the Spirit of God; in every country and among every people on the earth, this strict separation and decision begins whenever He comes and appears. It is his royal right to bring it. True, the more there is of what is divinely good in a man, the more of heavenly truth in opposition to the error and sin of the world, so much the more

will the same be approximately true also of him, that he urges all who come into contact with him to decide; still, no sinful man can presume to say: In me, in my person, the decision is made for the judgment, either for or against! *This* he only can say who is altogether truth and love itself, in the divine royal right of the only begotten Son; He who now says to all "Follow me!" and declares at the same time: Those who have not listened and obeyed I will not know at that day! Wherefore not? He tells us in His word: He who is not with me, who does not decide for me and yield himself up to me, who does not become mine in the obedience of faith, although he imagines himself and appears to be "not against me"—I know and say it, *he is nevertheless against me!* How so, then? Already inasmuch as, previous to this yielding up of himself to Christ, every sinful man is *by nature* against Him, as being against God. (Rom. viii. 7.) The enmity of the heart is therefore still there; if it were really overcome, then must the heart be with me. Neutrality here is no neutrality, but a remaining on the side of the enemy; indolence here is no mere indolence, but opposition; the merely not believing and not obeying is *still* resistance and rejection. This, however, is not all; there is more than this! To be *against Christ* is not merely to be in opposition to God as we all are by nature (which can and is to be atoned for, forgiven, taken away),—but it is wilfully to maintain and to aggravate such resistance, it is to resist the truth of God in its last and clearest revelation, the love of God in its highest manifestation, the power of God in the Holy Ghost which would win us and restore us. And truly that is a fearful degree of guilt, enough for the judgment! He who has perceived and experienced so much that he does not join himself to the open enemies of Christ, and is yet not won and overcome *for* him, has often all the greater resistance to him in his heart; so that, as regards the furtherance or hindrance of Christ's cause by the expression of the life, it is a question whether the neutrals are not the worst enemies in the great contest. But with all this it is to be well observed that it is only He, the Judge, who says this, only He knows it who knows the heart. We who judge of the internal state of a man only by the external marks, in which we may be deceived, who must abide by the other saying in Mark ix. 40

and not judge before the time, dare not say personally upon conscience of any one whatsoever, *Thou* art against Christ, because so far as *we* see thou art not with him! He alone speaks thus far: *He who* is not with me—and applies it to the conscience of the individual:—Thou also art meant here, I know it of thee, and thou canst and shalt know it when I discover it to thy heart. This saying, severe as it is, yet leaves room enough for charity in *our* judgments, as *Braune* has justly observed (only giving a one-sided prominence to this), "The most different *views* respecting the dignity of Christ do not exclude any from Him, if only there be left to Him the dignity of one sent from God; and the feeblest pointings *to Him* are not to be called a scattering."

The *first clause* of the saying is that which decides and penetrates, inasmuch as it touches the *principle of the heart* in which must be either the *with* or the *against;* but the *being* with him or against him, although first and foremost it means this internal principle of the life, is yet so expressed as to embrace the outward *manifestation* and *expression* in the whole conduct and character. For, indeed, as the tree so is the fruit, as the treasure of the heart so are the words of the mouth and the whole conduct. Now this,—as being, so to speak, the test and proof of the striking assertion,—the *second clause* brings forward into the full light of the entire truth which is here intended to be spoken. Christ does not first *require* this: He who is and would be with me, must gather also with me! He presupposes this as self-evident in the perfectly parallel expressions: every one ὢν μετ' αὐτοῦ is also a συνάγων, every one μὴ συνάγων (because inwardly κατ' αὐτοῦ is also outwardly) a σκορπίζων. In the expression *gathereth*, Christ connects what He says slightly with the foregoing figure in ver. 29, as also with the ground-idea of the whole discourse, namely, that there is a *unity* of the kingdom of God as opposed to the unity of Satan's kingdom; still, the expression is so general as to include also other figures, and, indeed, is itself quite independent. *What*, then, will He have to be gathered? Not treasures for the pomp and splendour of a Romish church throne, not even property for founding and establishing an evangelical state-church, not names on the roll of those who own His name; but *souls* are to be gathered, as vessels of honour to be used by the master of the house, which before were the house

furniture of the evil one; fruits are to be gathered for the eternal garner, seed which itself again bears fruit; sheep are to be brought to the shepherd which the wolf scatters not again. They are, first of all, brought *to Him*, led to him, gathered around him (Matt. xxiii. 37), but, at the same time and in addition to this, they are *brought together* into unity and concord, into the strong fellowship of conflict and victory formed by His united flock and Church. What a work, what a commission for the members and labourers of the kingdom, this *gathering together in one the children of God who are scattered abroad!* (John xi. 52). For this every subject must labour and work, for this every one who is in heart with the King will of himself work. To this *gathering* belongs also all preparatory work of any kind of παιδωγωγία εἰς Χριστὸν manifoldly exercised in the earthly calling, with a true eye to the one end; then, the bringing to Christ properly so called, the strengthening and upholding of those already brought to Him, the removing of the stones and making a plain path for His followers, the uniting and bringing into connexion all that is separated and isolated, in short the entire building up of the house which is to grow together in love, the entire sowing, and watering, and tending for the great harvest.

Christ in these words designates His kingdom as one that is indeed come in Him, but the building up of which is to be progressively carried out by His followers. Satan's kingdom *subsists* already on the earth in every human heart, in so far as it is against God and Christ; Christ has, indeed, first bound the strong one, but the subsequent spoiling of his house has since been going on from people to people and from soul to soul, by the labour of those who enter upon Christ's service. (John iv. 38). Shall we now, in reference to *activity* in the fellowship and service of Christ, shrink from the same strict alternative which acknowledges only gatherers or *dispersers?* Shall we at least think that the undecided and indolent, though he may still in heart be entirely or partially against Christ, is yet not so in his acting, does not outwardly hinder or injure the cause, so long as he conducts himself in this neutral way? *Neutrality is impossible*, says Christ, impossible as regards the internal state of the man, and therefore, also, as regards the actions which proceed thence; both are one. A man who is in heart altogether with

Christ cannot but gather for him everywhere and in everything; even without knowing and willing it; his light illumines, his anointing gives forth its savour, he bears rightfully the title of the old Roman emperor: "always extender of the kingdom"—at least as much as in him lies. No one is so much a hermit upon earth, even though he lives as a hermit, that his life is not related to others in the connexion of influence; Christ, however, will have no hermits, but labourers, and in whomsoever his spirit is, he brings them to work for his kingdom in all the work of the calling which each one has. The same, therefore, holds good on the other hand: He who does not take the field with me against Satan is not merely himself as yet under his yoke, but serves also in his kingdom; he who does not take his place and arms for the lawful king against the usurper is reckoned by the latter as upon his roll, that roll which he holds up before the people to let them see how great it is. The unfruitful tree stands as an offence in the way, and cumbers the ground (Luke xiii. 7). The greater the honesty and apparent absence of hostility from without, so much the more dangerous the offence, so much the more is every suppression of the name of Christ, when he should be acknowledged and praised, equal to a denial of him, so much the more efficacious also is the merely not working. In like manner, where there is an outward position in life to which the eyes of others are directed, where, in a word, there is an office to lead and to teach the people, such as these Pharisees had, this saying applies in its highest truth: He who gathers *not* with me *scatters abroad.* He scatters only *more and more* that which is already separated from God, and is another spoke in the wheel for the kingdom of the wicked one, that kingdom which is also not yet fulfilled among men, but which ceaselessly moves towards this fulfilment wherever the spirit and power of God does not interpose. He *scatters himself* in his indolent standing still, which, indeed, is no standing still, for he goes ever farther from the kingdom of God, while he imagines himself to be only standing before or at the door, without yielding himself up as an instrument and workman in the house; as, on the other hand, he who gathers in his diligence and zeal, at the same time, unites whatever in his own soul may yet be out of Christ into a firmer unity of faith and life proceeding from Christ. For *this*

sense, also, lies beneath the general saying which comprehends all fulness of truth.

Finally, for we are not yet done, emphasis is to be laid in the second clause on: He who *gathers*, but *not with me*, whose gathering is itself a dispersing! Nay, this is really the extreme point of the paradoxical antithesis. No one *can* truly (not merely in vain or mistakenly) gather *to him* without gathering *with him*; hence it is not said merely: He who does not gather to me. To bring souls to Christ in one's own strength and reason, with a selfish object—how can that be possible? Thus far, certainly, the προφάσει in Phil. i. 18, does not extend. As there is a passive, so is there also an active, *false friendship* with Christ. Some ask: Am I then against thee, merely because I am not for thee? Others again: Am I not with thee? See my zealous labours for thy kingdom? But Christ looks into the heart, and says: No, thou art, nevertheless, not with me, thy labour is in my sight only injury and destruction. Oh! how many famous and proud labourers in the building up of the church and kingdom are included in this sentence! They gather, indeed, but not with him, not in his mind and spirit, consequently, also, not *to him* and *for him*—if not to draw disciples *to themselves* (Acts xx. 30), making merchandise of dear-bought souls (2 Pet. ii. 3), yet for a form, party, church or sect. These, in great things and in small, act upon the maxim: Every one is to follow Christ *with us*. Where this is not done they repel and disperse, and those, too, whom they have gathered to themselves they have thereby turned away from Christ. To create such confusion, so that Babel may seem again to be revived in Zion, is Satan's greatest art and pleasure; then he mocks, when that which has no place in his empire, namely, that Satan cast out Satan, is yet done in the kingdom of God, when the subjects dissever the kingdom, and Christians cast out Christ.

Thus the *first* clause of the saying strikes terror into the open enemies of Christ by the already pronounced judicial sentence: You are *against me!* in which lies, indeed, the entire condemnation of enmity to God. But it also lays open the heart of the externally neutral hypocrites, to whom the same judicial sentence belongs. The *second* clause, while it first of all shows to these

hypocrites, their inward state from their outward character, at the same time lays open to the real disciples of Christ all their remaining indolence, indecision, and perversity, and constantly shames even them into being entirely, both outwardly and inwardly, *with Christ*. He who is not yet entirely with me, is in so far still against me; that in you, and belonging to you, which does not yet gather with me, disperses! We must, indeed, have shrunk with fear from this severe sentence of truth, did there not immediately follow the gracious assurance that there is forgiveness for all sins, except the one which is committed only when a man has become quite like Satan.

This comforting assurance follows somewhat remarkably and significantly here, where, after having adduced proof in detail as to the entire opposition between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God, an opposition that reaches to the heart and life, the will and conduct of every individual, Christ declares the *rebuke* of those sinners who wilfully mistake this. The first part of this rebuke is a *warning* against the unpardonable sin, in contradistinction to which, with the most gracious gentleness, the forgiveness of all others is declared. This sin, which already showed itself typically in the *blasphemy against God* uttered by the Pharisees, and therefore derives its name from this, Christ marks out (as in warnings is very natural) as the fearful end of the way upon which they then were, and as, in some measure, coinciding with their present sin: hence, in vers. 34—37, the address runs as if they had already committed it, while yet, in vers. 31, 32, it is only indefinitely set before them by way of warning. The intermediate sentence which unites these two is in ver. 33. Will not such fruit at last grow upon such a corrupt tree, if it does not now let itself be engrafted into the good tree? We might also divide the passage in another way, and say: Christ shows the *unpardonable sin*, first, in its peculiar *greatness* in itself (more generally ver. 31, more emphatically repeated, ver. 32); then, in the *source* or principle whence (by increasing persistency in evil) it must at length result (if the corrupt tree will not know the good, so as yet itself to become good—ver. 93—the figure properly applied in the address vers. 34, 35); finally, in its *consequences*, the inevitable condemnation

according to the general law (ver. 36), and according to the more general fundamental law (ver. 37), for judging the internal state by the outward *expression*.

Vers. 31, 32. The Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν, which Matthew puts instead of the Ἀμὴν of Mark, has its own suitable significance. *Therefore*,—because, according to what has just been said, the opposition between Satan's kingdom and God's, between fellowship with Me, and fellowship with the wicked one, is so clearly an attested fact. *Therefore*, I say further to you gainsayers and calumniators: It is a very serious and dangerous thing! Many a one may be *against Me*, may speak or act against Me, even for a whole life time, and yet forgiveness stand open to him; but there is, even in this world, a wilful contradiction and resistance which forfeits all grace for ever—therefore, I have reason to say to *you*, *Beware!*

That in the divine judgment it is internal sin as such that is judged, while yet it is apprehended and convicted in its *expression*, and in such a manner that *words*, as the most decided evidence of the principle of the heart, are placed before actions—this fundamental idea, essential to the understanding of the whole passage, is announced in the first words. All *sin*—that is, the most general, truly proper, name, to which belongs also that which is excepted. Lest we should associate with this word first of all (as, alas! men are wont to do in *their* superficial use of words), so-called common, simple sins, Christ immediately intensifies the expression, and puts between these common sins and the unpardonable sin, *blasphemy*—not as an isolated, casually dropped word, but as the fruit of an evil heart. In Mark it is expressly said: αἱ βλασφημίαι, ὅσας ἂν βλασφημήσωσιν, and Luther rightly extends: wherewith they blaspheme *God*; for, although βλασφημεῖν occurs elsewhere in a wider sense, here it is certainly this sin in so far as it is committed against God, and can be forgiven only by God, consequently, blasphemy against God is meant, even where it expresses itself as calumny against a man (Erasmus here *convitium*). Ἀφεθήσεται by no means merely, *can* be forgiven; for from this *can* the actual forgiveness follows of itself, according to the great and richly provided grace of God. Still less, as some think, who incompetently trifle with the words, trying to blunt the sharpness of the

expression, are they to be taken in a comparative sense: For all other sins, forgiveness is, comparatively speaking, possible; but absolutely, as it stands: *they shall be forgiven.* So much the more directly and strikingly does it stand in opposition to the entirely unconditional οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται in respect to the βλασφημία τοῦ πνεύματος, or (as Mark more concisely expresses it βλασφημεῖν εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα), the εἰπεῖν λόγον κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου. What is this? It is still more definitely limited by its being opposed to speaking against the Son of Man, inasmuch as for this latter sin also there is forgiveness. Many find here a gradation according to the rank of the three persons in the Godhead; but, in the first place, the first general βλασφημία certainly does not refer to God the Father in particular (for which supposition there is not the slightest ground), and then, in the second, the *Son* is expressly set forth, not in His divine nature, but as the Son of Man, liable, in His state of humiliation, to be unknown and calumniated. The aggravation of the sin, in respect of its guilt (Mark ἔνοχός ἐστιν), as is implied in the antithesis between the Son of man and the Holy Spirit, is determined not by the rank of the *object* against whom the sin is committed (according to which the Father would very improperly stand lowest in the Trinity), but by the increased clearness of the revelation of God, in proportion to which, of course, sin must be committed always with more of *consciousness* and *will.*[1] All sin and blasphemy is against God, consequently also against the Son, and in like manner, against the Spirit of God, through whom the revelation of truth, the rebuking and drawing of the sinner is accomplished. The name, *sin* again the Holy Ghost is, in so far, an improper designation, at least very liable to be misunderstood, and in which a departure is made from the word of Christ. By how much a man resists God and is disobedient, from the degree of general unbelief (Acts vii. 51) on to the last grieving of the Spirit in the saints (Eph. iv. 36), by so much he sins also against the Holy Spirit. All this is forgiven, says Christ. Nay, He

1 Thus, already did Origen refute the error that might seem to find support in this passage, as if in it the Holy Ghost were placed above the Logos. Not because the Holy Ghost stands higher, is the sin heavier, but because he who has received the Holy Ghost stands higher in the Christian life.

speaks still kindly: He who speaks (and acts) against me, against my person as the Son of Man, although already accredited as the Son of God, and come from God—whosoever calumniates me, this I judge not! Thus far is the grace of the New Testament dispensation opened up here in opposition to the typical Old Testament, in which even the simple blaspheming against the name of God had no atonement provided for it, and was punished by the sinner's being cut off from the people.[1] Saul spake and acted against the Son of Man (1 Tim. i. 13), even after the Spirit had vindicated his claims to be the Son of God, the Jews crucified Him after the resurrection of Lazarus, and yet He said of them: Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do.* The mockers on the day of Pentecost knew not what that was until the words of Peter entered into their ears; Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit; but whether he also blasphemed Him we do not know. All this is not yet properly the sin which Christ here means. But it may be questioned whether Caiaphas (Matth. xxvi. 64, 65), did not blaspheme the witnessing spirit, when he called the confession of Christ a blasphemy; for the "Thou sayest it," intimates that he himself well knew that which he yet wilfully asks. We observe, that "*against the Holy Ghost,*" means against the most direct and conclusive testimony, by which the person who, nevertheless, contradicts and resists is yet *entirely convinced,* consequently, sins with the most complete knowledge and will; and this is the idea most essentially belonging to the unpardonable sin, which might certainly be committed also before the day of Pentecost, for, otherwise, Christ had not spoken of it here to the Pharisees. It was possible so to calumniate Christ in his state of humiliation as that it should be blasphemy against the Spirit, brought perfectly to the conciousness by the truth of his doctrine and the dignity of his person; it is possible still so to blaspheme Christ in his state of exaltation, as that it is seen by God to proceed from the ignorance of unbelief

[1] What clearness, majesty, and freedom on the part of the Saviour, thus, in the midst of this warm controversy and conflict to distinguish so sharply between the different enemies, so that according to what is here said, all the enemies of Christianity, in every age, must be distinguished.

(1 Tim. i. 13) against the Son of Man, against this Jesus of Nazareth (Acts xxvi. 9), and therefore forgiven.

Christ certainly speaks here of an individual act, nay, rather of an individual word, for in such expression all sin fulfils and attests itself for the judgment; but the individual expression is, of course, so significant, only as the fruit of the tree, and the emanation from the principle of the heart, vers. 33, 34. As Grashof simply and strikingly observes, it is the same here as with the *Raca* and *Fool* (chap. v. 22). Consequently, the expression presupposes an *internal state* developed up to this point, in which lies the *sin* properly so-called, which is always something belonging to a state, never an isolated speaking or acting as such.[1] Where are we to look for the sin to which, in opposition to all others, Christ unconditionally denies forgiveness? How has the want of understanding, even in those who are otherwise most intelligent, confused his clear words! How humbling to find such a man as *Wesley*, for example, saying that he finds "nothing more clear in the Bible" than that this sin is neither more nor less than what these people here did: "the ascribing those miracles to the power of the devil, which Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost." Menken, also, is of opinion, that this blasphemy was only possible at that time, when Christ was present in visible personality, and performed acts through the power of the Spirit of God—but we cannot so lightly pass over the depths of this dreadful word. It is, rather, pretty clear from the *warning* words λέγω ὑμῖν, that those Pharisees were only on the way towards this highest degree of guilt,[2] and although this should remain doubtful, yet that, at all events, the same must be possible now, much more even than then. Or, shall we say, that the convincing manifestation of the Spirit of God, in word and in power, is less now, than it was

[1] "For this sin is not a *merely* outward act, as if, by the secret magic of certain words which do not emanate from the depths of the heart, one could commit the worst sin and consign himself immediately to eternal perdition." So Jul. Müller, on the doctrine of Sin, vol. ii., p. 476, (Clark's Foreign Theological Library), who in general quite agrees with us in our interpretation.

[2] Mark iii. 30 by no means says, that Christ imputed this sin to them, but explains only the name which he gives to it from the occasion which certainly foreshadowed it.

then in Christ upon earth? Does there not lie in the antithesis between the Son of Man and the Holy Ghost, a real reference to the days of the Holy Ghost, *after* the days of the Son of Man? The more powerfully and convincingly the Comforter, who is come, reproves the world by and without the word, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, the greater the works which the Apostles do after Christ (John xiv. 12), *i.e.*, the more comprehensive and convincing the *works of Christ*, as wrought by his followers in the history of the Church and the world, appear, so much the more impossible now, than before, must it become from century to century, for any one who wilfully rejects the testimony of the Spirit, to retain the plea of ignorance in such conduct, upon the ground of which it might be forgiven. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost has been here and there committed since Christ appeared, but it is to be pre-eminently the sin of the last time, the consummation of anti-christianism. It is the substance of that to which the *type* of blasphemy against God, (under the Old Testament dispensation) remotely corresponds.

Christ speaks, certainly, not *de peccato homini cavendo, quamquam in hominem non cadente*, for his clear and true word has in it no mere empty bugbears, knows nothing of contradiction with itself, as this title of a once famous and well-meant writing would in vain reconcile the *homini cavendum* with the *in hominem non cadens*. What Lange, again, maintains (Leben Jesu iii. 126) is not true, namely, that a man cannot blaspheme the Holy Ghost with perfect knowledge of his doing so. "If man can truly *love* God and what is good, then must he also be able to *hate* God and what is good"—says Grashof in answer to this, and the Apostle of love testifies that *there is a sin unto death.* (John v. 16.) So much, however, is certainly true in that amiable opinion, that the highest sin, the pure, or rather the altogether impure, *hatred* of the good and holy Spirit of God, which expresses itself in conscious blasphemy against him, is no longer the sin of man in the ordinary sense, but of *Satan*. If it has gone thus far with a man, he is then no longer under Satan's power and delusion, but has himself become a freely acting and conscious Satan. This is as truly possible and real, as that there can be no restraint of a compelling grace to prevent the continued

sin of man, so that it must be the end of the downward course, the same actual abyss into which Satan fell in his first complete fall. It is not, therefore (as Gurlitt thinks), contemptuous *indifference* to all that is good and holy which is here spoken of—of which Julius Müller truly says that it is impossible—but *positive hatred.* This transition of unbelief "from the merely tolerable character of indolence and cowardice to that of the most hateful falsehood," Nitzsch also designates as at least a *conceivable* height of resistance. (System, § 142.)

From this we may hope it will be understood, why Christ can do nothing else than denounce against the Satanic sin, Satan's everlasting condemnation without forgiveness. His words indicate this relation between *all sin and blasphemy* and this *blasphemy* peculiar in its kind, by the striking expression τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, to which Mark gives still greater prominence, so that all other sins belong τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, while the blasphemer of the Spirit (the singular ὃς δ' ἄν) appears as a man fallen from the human state, a monster. The expression *neither in this world nor in the world to come*, cannot mean here the Rabinical עוֹלָם הַזֶּה and הַבָּא as the time before and after the appearance of Christ, for, in this case, there could have been no αἰὼν μέλλων when Christ spake; still less can ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος mean, as in the writings of the Apostles, the evil world without God and Christ, for in it there is in general no forgiveness. It means the time before and after the death of man.[1] It is in so far, certainly, a proverbial expression for *now and never*, Mark οὐκ ἔχει ἄφεσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα;[2] but when *Christ* speaks proverbs they become truth in his mouth, He never speaks *animo commoto* (as Kuinoel thought), so that his words should not be taken in their exact sense. The jejune sense (with which Alford again satisfies himself) goes completely against the letter, namely, that if a sin is

[1] If Julius Müller thinks otherwise: "αἰὼν μέλλων is the period of the manifest, consequently of the perfectly realised, Messianic kingdom which is not set up till after the resurrection and the judgment of the world"—where then remains the *continuity* of the time embraced by neither-nor?

[2] As in Sepler chasidim num. 234, one Jew says to another: I shall not forgive this, neither in this world nor in the world to come. Which may be added to what is adduced by Grotius here.

forgiven or retained *here*, it is, therewith also, forgiven or retained in the world to come. This is precisely what we deny! Of the utmost importance, when the words are taken exactly as they ought to be, is the demonstrable inference *ex vi oppositi* that other sins are forgiven also *in the world to come*. *Neque enim de quibusdam* veraciter *diceretur, quod non eis remittatur neque in hoc saeculo neque in futuro*, nisi essent quibus, etsi non in isto, tamen remittetur in futuro. (August. de civ. lib. 21 c. 24). Nay, Christ has already maintained much more than the mere possibility of forgiveness for some sins even in the world to come, when he declared that all sin, except this one, *shall really be forgiven*, at all events in the world to come.[1] And there is good ground for this, indeed it cannot be otherwise; for, as there can be no standing still either in good or in evil, but must be a development onwards to the full degree of ripeness for the eternal fire or for eternal life, so also, in the other world, it goes on till the last judgment in the same way as here upon earth: all sin which belongs to a man at death developes itself either to the blasphemy against the Spirit, to the Satanic sin, which alone casts down to eternal fellowship with Satan,[2] or it is through means of not yet ceasing grace, taken away and *forgiven*.[3] But, let it be well observed, it is *forgiven* also in the world to come, by no means, expiated, discharged, purged away by fire or forced away. All salting with fire (Mark ix. 49), and all purifying pain, can only awaken in the freely acting creature, the penitent faith which lays hold on grace—in that world not otherwise than in this.

The sum of what has been said is this: The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which alone remains for the judgment, is the consummated absolute sin of the devil, to which man also may arrive, and this Christ denotes, according to Mark, by a peculiar

[1] König, the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell, p. 238.

[2] Precisely to the same effect Jul. Müller: "Rather must the sinful development, if it be not reversed by the redemption, everywhere complete itself in the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost."

[3] By no means merely in the sense in which v. Gerlach weakens and trifles with the words: "he who through great anxiety of mind has not experienced the comfort here may *there* first attain to the *enjoyment* of forgiveness"—as if this alone were meant by "forgiven!"

word adapted to the peculiar nature of the sin, a word which perfectly corresponds to the fundamental idea of his discourse: ἔνοχός ἐστιν αἰωνίου ἁμαρτίας or ἁμαρτήματος (for which κρίσεως is certainly only a gloss), he is guilty of an *eternal sin*. Here we look with horror into the abyss of guilt, for which only the abyss of condemnation remains. We cannot, therefore, see our way, with Meyer, and all those who believe in a final restoration, to add to the words: "As long as it continues"—with which, strangely enough, just as before with the *cavendum* and *non cadens*, what he goes on to say stands in contradiction: "because it presupposes an entire hardening and an incurable wickedness." We regard the unpardonable sin,—the eternal sin of which Christ here speaks, and of which he was led to speak, from a special occasion, so that he characterises it according to one of its expressions, that which was precisely here foreshadowed—not merely in this or that other of its manifold expressions, but in its deepest ground, which Christ here at the same time lays open. It is the rejection and—on account of this its inherent eternal nature as a sin—the eternally unpardonable rejection of the perfectly known, immediate, testimony of the Spirit, with which the Holy Ghost has presented the truth and grace, developed in a human being, till it brings him to be of the same nature with Satan. It is committed when the man, with entire conviction, knows what, in complete wickedness, he does, for thus did Christ on the cross, mark the limits of forgiveness and atonement. It is distinguished from every other pardonable sin of man by this, that in it there is not even a minimum of Satanic *deceit* practised upon the understanding (Gen. iii. 13), or *compulsion* of any nature, or by any creature, upon the will, but the purely evil is willed, spoken, and done instead of the known and rejected good, the lie, as such, instead of the blasphemed truth. That it should be forgiven is impossible, not on God's account, but on account of the creature, who has put himself under such a ban, that he henceforth remains incapable of repentance and faith in divine grace.

When Christ here designates the sin against the Holy Ghost as that which is alone unpardonable, and, notwithstanding the Scripture speaks of sins unto death, for which no repentance, no grace, and no sacrifice can be of any avail, it follows, beyond contradiction, that all those passages are to be understood merely

of different forms of development and expression, but, at bottom, as speaking of one and the same sin! In this light 1 John v. 16; 2 Tim. iii. 8; Jude 4, 12, 13; Heb. x. 26—31, vi. 4—8, are to be considered; while, from the last cited passage, it may be seen, that the fall into such an abyss, even of those who have been regenerated, is possible and real. But that not merely those who have fallen back may commit the unpardonable sin (as some have thought), is very evident again from 2 Tim. iii. 8.

Vers. 33—35. With how much propriety for the explanation of what goes before, this tracing back of the outward expressions to its ternal ground now follows, we have already seen and have little to add by way of interpretation; all the less that Christ, evidently repeating, recurs to his Sermon on the Mount,[1] as, in what He says about trees, and in the expression, "generation of vipers," He goes still farther back to the Baptist's first repentance-sermon, with which these people had again to begin. From the last outbreak of diabolic sin, He turns warningly back to its first source in the heart of man! Ποιήσατε seems at first to be a Latinism, inasmuch as the tone of address now anew takes the form of a logical demonstration, as at ver. 25. *Imagine, suppose,* or *put the case,*—still there lies beneath the surface of this, as the German "Setzet" well renders it, the proper sense of the word, derived from the *planting* of a tree; for, as the parallel accusatives show, the expression is strikingly brought up on purpose from the ποιεῖν καρπόν to the tree. If you will *bring forth* fruit, then first bring forth the tree for this! To *suppose* the tree to be good will not do! Against the false interpretation according to which Christ would merely say: Suppose the case —Julius Müller has also objected, that in this sense, the confirmation ἐκ γὰρ—γινώσκεται would not be at all suitable. The same learned writer (not always acutely exegetical) denotes here the two main ideas of the text quite correctly: As from the quality of the tree the quality of the fruit follows of itself, so the good and evil actions of man follow from the good or evil state of his heart; but this state is itself again conditioned by

[1] Into which Luke (ch. vi. 45), as we there saw, has inserted this passage. We hold, at all events, that the present occurrence does not belong to the period *before* the Sermon on the Mount.

the *fundamental determinations of the will*, ποιήσατε τὸ δένδρον κτλ. (V. d. Sünde ii. 79, 80). This is well said, for the ποιήσατε which, first of all, *ironically* expresses the impotency of nature, immediately takes the force of an earnest challenge. For, in order to do and speak what is good, the tree, the fountain, must become different. The λαλεῖν proceeds only from the εἶναι, in the heart is the fountain whence the words of the mouth flow, and their being good or evil is manifest from the state of the heart, to Him who knows the heart, just as *vice versa* the words betray the heart to the judgment of men, and in spite of all hypocrisy expose to conviction also before the tribunal of God. For the fountain *cannot but* overflow according to its nature and kind. Jam. iii. 11. The expresssion ἐκ τοῦ περισσεύματος λαλεῖν is from Prov. ii. 15; Sept. That which is denoted by περίσσευμα is farther called θησαυρός: The innermost storehouse of life in the heart of man, open only to the eye of God, where those influences which determine the personal state and character form themselves, in order thence to flow forth again in the expressions of the life. (Beck.) It is not good or bad words and works that make a good or bad man, but *vice versa*.[1] "If the heart be worthless, then the virtue also is worthless." Christ's sharp word of rebuke here comes as a good word from His holy truth in love, while the finest hypercritical speeches, smooth as butter, are only so much the worse on account of the venomous source whence they proceed. The man forms himself *freely* between the kingdom of God and Satan; the strong one is not so strong as that the *bad* man who is bound in his service, nay, developing to his likeness, is not bad through a criminal surrender of himself; nor is the *Stronger One* so strong as to make the bad man good by force. The good man and the bad: these are not by nature two different kinds of men, for we are indeed all bad (chap. vii. 11; Mar. vii. 21, 22), and the good man here as opposed to such in the highest degree is Christ, who even now speaks good words to them, and then all who, as renewed men, participate in His grace before and after His coming in the flesh. Christ, as the γινώσκεται at the beginning indicated, will here,

[1] Compare the saying of Aristotle, which Neander cites in the Deutsche Zeitschrift für christl. Wissenschaft. (1850 p. 152.)

in connexion at the sametime with all that preceeds, say and ask: "If *My* fruits, works and words are *good*, works of love and words of truth, am I myself, then, from God or a friend of Beelzebub?" For, the most evil man is he who speaks evil against the good man who bears witness of himself by his goodness. The worst tree *plants* itself, inasmuch as it will not know the good tree, from which healing is to come to it, will not let itself be implanted into it—therefore is it known at last by the worst fruit.

Vers. 36, 37. What the tongue speaks is very significant: for the small member not only does great things, but it is also nearer the heart than the hand is. Men may, with wilful folly, say: A word or two spoken which meant nothing, what is there in this? I have surely in this done nothing bad! The history of the world and of man's life everywhere refutes such folly, and says loudly: Words are acts, which work most deeply and lastingly, even in the spiritual sphere in which works alone are taken into account; and that not merely the words of the leaders and representatives of the people—to whom certainly it chiefly applies—but in general; nor is it merely discourses which at the time seem great and powerful, but the smallest word which, after it has escaped the tongue, thou canst never recall, is a seed which grows and bears good or evil fruits, such as can never be computed. God, however, judges sin not according to its effects, but according to the motive and intentions. Here thou sayest again falsely against the truth; I only speak so and so, the heart means nothing bad! Yes, in those rare instances in which this is true, the words will not be charged against the heart; but in by far the most of cases, indeed in general, the word is the proper expression of the heart, showing its real character more surely even than the act. Where the *gehenna* burns in the heart, there hypocritical works are of no avail, the course of the natural life which cannot be restrained, catches fire upon the tongue, and the whole body, however outwardly clean and pure, is tainted by the evil words. Jam. iii. 6. Let one only hear what, even those who are most honoured *speak* within their four walls, or even in public! There are words of anger, of scandal, of pride, envenomed words against their neighbour, words of rebellion against God, which weigh heavier in the balance than many

deeds, which, at one view, lay open the whole treasure of evil in the heart, from which alone they could proceed. Hence, also, there is in the first and second tables of the decalogue, not to mention that all its commandments point in the same direction, a command expressly for the mouth. Immediately after the command against idolatry and the worship of images, comes the one against taking the name of God in vain, and immediately before that, against the covetousness of the heart, is the one against falseness of speech, which is always and ought to be, an evidence of the former. This reaches far and deep! Did Christ, first of all, speak of *blasphemies* as the worst words which are the expression of the worst sin, and then, coming downwards, designate as "evil" in general that which the mouth brings forth from the heart. He now descends still farther to the *πᾶν ῥῆμα ἀργόν* (placed before in an absolute form for emphasis) which implies still less than the apostle's *πᾶς λόγος σαπρὸς, κενοὶ λόγοι* (Ephes. iv. 29; v. 6). Where there is no good fruit of truth and love unto edification, there this very unprofitableness and emptiness is itself an evil fruit; before God's judgment, however, not even the smallest word which a man has ever spoken is forgotten! *Ἀποδώσουσι λόγον περὶ παντὸς λόγου.* How shall they then be dumb and have not one word to answer for a thousand, if the *justifying* good words, proceeding from the spirit of grace and prayer, do not weigh heavier in the balance of the Judge![1] It will, we hope, be seen, with what perfect justice Christ here, instead of the principle of judgment which most commonly occurs in the Old and New Testament: "To every man according to his *works*," lays down the more appropriate one, which we find in ver. 37. Even in human judicial processes, this is a proverbial rule, as Eliphaz expresses it in the book of Job, where the discourse was precisely concerning *unprofitable* words. Job xv. 2, 6. By the *tongue* we write for ourselves the most decisive protocol of our future trial before the tribunal of the highest Justice, and all that was in us, all that we have done, or as good

[1] A writer in Tholuck's Anzeiger 1848 p. 311 has taken great offence at the expression "justifying good words," and sees in it a want of "unity and exactness of *dogmatical* interpretation." As if this heresy against the exact terminology of dogmatics were not here only Christ's own expression!

as done, speaks then loudly in our words as a silencing confession, as our own testimony.

That which Luke chap. xi. 16, has placed before, along with the calumny: *by Beelzebub*, &c., as the occasion of Christ's address, —was according to Matthew only now objected to him, in reply to what he had said. So much, however, we learn from Luke, did we not perceive this also in Matthew from the thing itself, that those who demanded a sign were *different* persons from the blasphemers. They are not quite so bad as to reject all His signs as the decided work of the Devil, but all that he had given hitherto, were not sufficient to prove that they were from God, they want to see another which goes still farther than these, *to see a sign*. As Luke rightly adds, and as in Matth. xvi. 1; John vi. 30, 31, the demand is repeated as a sign *from Heaven*. Now, these words of wilful unbelief are not much better than the foregoing, and therefore Christ does not change His strain on account of them, but only makes them the occasion of carrying out the warning which he had brought to the threshold of the judgment, to a complete prophetic *threatening* of the *doom* which was ready to break over the unbelieving race. What the challengers meant by the "sign from heaven" we will leave to be explained at chap. xvi., and here, first of all, interpret the answer, which He there repeats to them with closer reference to the signs of the times then already present. He uttered this in the presence of all the people (Matth. ver. 46; Luke τῶν ὄχλων ἐπαθροιζομένων, which only indicates a being together or a gathering together, not precisely a thronging towards Him) and he includes the Pharisees in the whole race which was like them, and was expressing itself by them. He *predicts* Israel's destruction and judgment, which will break out, if this people, as a whole, persist in their unbelief, even after the last sign which is yet to be afforded them, and if they reject the testimony of the Spirit when the risen Son of Man is justified, and once more preaches to them repentance unto the forgiveness of sins by the Apostles in His name. He announces this last and most perfect sign taken from the hell that had been vanquished, a sign which had all the value of one from above,

and which indeed became such on the day of Pentecost (vers. 39, 40). Then, he announces the unbelief of the people under that preaching of the Apostles, as in the present,—the unbelief of Israel in their Messiah, which is condemned by the faith of the heathen who listened to a Jonah, and who even sought out a Solomon (vers. 41, 42). Consequently (vers. 43—45), the final and complete destruction, if after a previous casting out of Satan, His power shall again take possession of this people, and in a worse form.

Vers. 39, 40. Israel is not merely an *evil* generation (which Luke has alone), as are also all heathen, but, as Matthew in both places significantly adds, an *adulterous*, which alludes to the special covenant of God with this people, which they had broken. *Γενεὰ μοιχαλίς* cannot denote here merely, or in the first place, a generation begotten by adultery, and is therefore wrongly compared with John viii. 41, but one which commits adultery; idolatrous in heart, with all their Pharisaical ornament on the outside, just as, in former times, in open idolatry. (Hos. i. 2, ii. 2, 5.) But already in this allusion to the adulterous children of the adulterous wife, as also in the *γενεά* (which corresponds to the *γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν*, ver. 34), there certainly lies, at the same time, a reference back to the sins of the fathers out of which the children are begotten in order to fill up its measure, and hence, also, an explanation of the final destruction, by the fearfully continuous progress of evil from generation to generation. The seed of adulterers is itself adulterous in the twofold sense of which we read in Isa. lvii. 3, and Prov. iii. 16, iv. 6. They demanded signs of which they had already had enough, from the desert onwards, where they tempted God, and put him to the test whether he could do this and that according to their lust, and just in the same way do they act now towards Christ. But, although the long-suffering of Christ continued to perform miracles until his hands were bound in Gethsemane, still, no signs of such a kind *were given in answer to their request*, but that last one which he had already at the beginning announced to them (John ii. 19) in answer to a like challenge, *the sign of the Prophet Jonas*, and this, too, was to be in vain for them! For they who believed not Moses and the Prophets could not believe on Christ, even though he were to rise from the dead.

The explanation which *Luke* gives, ver. 30, of what the sign of Jonas is, does not by any means contradict the one here given by *Christ*,[1] but is only an abridged and indefinite statement of what Matthew gives in detail in vers. 40 and 41; as well the similitude of the resurrection as the call to repentance. We could, indeed, scarcely understand the more obscure account of Luke without the assistance of Matthew, but we ought, therefore, with grateful docility, to receive what the Spirit has caused to be written for us, and not wilfully to darken what is clear. The history of the Old Testament presents no more striking example of a wonderful preservation from certain death that that of the prophet Jonah, nay, it is singular in its kind, inasmuch as the Prophet, although as it were shut up in death and buried, yet came forth again to life: therefore is this history recorded as a similitude and type of the resurrection of Christ, as, in the sphere of the type, a resurrection of one really dead was not yet possible. The expressions in the Book of Jonah intimate plainly enough to him who reads aright, that the Spirit of prophecy, even then, wrote them with reference to Christ. The prayer of Jonah (chap. 2), was really uttered in the belly of the fish (κῆτος an indefinite expression in the Sept. for דָּג גָּדוֹל), as Luther renders it, although in the Hebrew it is מְמַּעֵי; for the deliverance follows in ver. 11, and to take this in the pluperfect, and understand at the beginning: *out of* the belly, *i.e.*, after he had been saved, and was out of it, would be too far-fetched. The whole prayer in his distress is certainly, at the same time, a thanksgiving, a confident expectation of help, with which the prophet, even from the bowels of the fish, sends up his cry to God's heavens and the light of life; but that is his *faith*, which was the speedy result of his finding that he miracu-

[1] Which, according to Schleiermacher is again "only a false interpretation of the reporter's own, which he has mixed up with the words of Christ," namely, on the supposition of its being a recollection already weakened and confused! Neander, unhappily, almost to the same effect says, that ver. 40 is an entirely unsuitable, later addition, the sign of Jonas only representing the "manifestation of the Son of Man as a whole" in contradistinction to every single sign or miracle. That the resurrection was a sign only for believers is against the whole Acts of the Apostles (from chap. ii. 32, 33 onwards), against Rom. i 4, and all the Apostolic preaching.

lously remained alive within the fish, and that he could pray for help. The Spirit, in his record of the prayer, (for in such histories, still more than in other places, the difference between the written and acted history holds good, so that we do not expect to find the bare actual occurrence literally in the word) views, in perfect accordance with the system that pervades all Scripture, the depths of the sea (בְּלֵב יַמִּים ver. 4), at the same time as the abyss of the realm of the dead, where the floods of destruction, the waters of Belial drown; the belly of the monster is the belly of hell (בֶּטֶן שְׁאוֹל ver. 3). Thus from the prophetical text are derived the expressions of Christ here, with which He places the type there already indicated, completely in the light of fulfilment: the *κοιλία* corresponds, as to the מְעֵי הַדָּג, so also at the same time to the בֶּטֶן שְׁאוֹל, and the *καρδία τῆς γῆς* points back at once to the בְּלֵב יַמִּים and the הָאָרֶץ בְּרִיחֶיהָ בַּעֲדִי. If Christ meant to denote by these expressions nothing more than death and the grave, inasmuch as the body lay in the earth, then, not only would the heart, the centre of the earth, be too strong an expression for his sepulchre in the rock, besides its being not true that the Son of Man was himself so long in the earth—but what is chiefly to be objected to this is, that the word of fulfilment would thus remain behind the word of prophecy. No, he means—let a theology or dogmatism, which shuts its eyes to these things, say what it will to the contrary—his actual abode in the Sheol, the realm of the dead, beneath, and in the heart of, the earth,[1] or, to speak in dogmatic phraseology, the descent into hell, of which Eph. iv. 9, testifies. That which the type could shadow forth only outwardly was, in its mysterious and essential significance, fulfilled in Him who thus entered into the strong man's house to bind him there, who proved himself to be victorious over him in the highest power of the quickening spirit of God, even when the leviathan appeared to have swallowed Him up, and when it was said over the earth, The prophet is devoured, it is all over with

[1] Since microcosmically the heart of man actually corresponds to the innermost part of the earth, for which compare Jam. iii. 6, and Prov. xxvii. 19, 20, (and if possible our interpretations of both passages.)

him. "But thou hast brought forth my life from destruction, O Lord my God." Jon. ii. 7.

Three days and three nights—not longer, and then will the Son of Man come forth to life, as it happened with Jonah.[1] Then, just as Jonah preached to the Ninevites, a new preaching will begin, in which the risen Saviour will be a sign for repentance unto this generation, as Jonah, saved from the fish, was to the Ninevites. Then will He, who, even now (a greater than Jonas is here!), displays Himself to your eyes and ears as the true sign, the bread from heaven (John vi. 51), be, by the highest possible miracle, which seals all that went before, offered to you as the bread of life; then will follow upon this sign *from beneath*, wrought upon the *Son of Man* by the power of God, the Pentecostal signs from *heaven*,—for Daniel's vision of the glorification of the Son of Man begins from that time to be fulfilled (as Christ, Matth. xxvi. 64, in the depth of ignominy, announces by a "*from this time forth*"). All this, Christ sees and signifies in His words; those who heard Him plainly understood so much, at least, as they afterwards came to show, namely, that He would *rise again after three days;* therefore they set a watch upon the grave *until the third* day.[2] (Matth. xxvii. 63, 64.)

[1] Although it is not without significance that, precisely on the third day, corruption in general begins to appear, we are yet certainly not at liberty with Hofman (Weiss. u. Erf. ii. 262) to make that alone the ground of Christ's words, which expressly refer to Jonas. Comp. also 1st Cor. xv. 4.

[2] The refutation of the trifling and presumptuous after-reckoning of the three days and nights belongs only to a note. In the *Talm. Hieros.* it is expressly said: "Day and night make together a space of time (עוֹנָה), and the part of such is as the whole." The Jews reckoned νυχθήμερα (2 Cor. xi. 25), and said, so many *days and nights* (Gen. vii. 12; Ex. xxiv. 18). (Compare Esth. iv. 16 with v. 1; 1 Sam. xxx. 12, 13; 2 Chron. x. 5, 12; 1 Kings xx. 29.) Consequently, if Christ died at the end of the first day, and arose at the breaking of the third, there are three day-night periods, and he says here nothing else than in the other passages: "in three days, on the third day." According to König (Descent into Hell, p. 197), Damascenus Studita has ingeniously reckoned, that Christ was thirty-three hours in Hades as he was thirty-three years on the earth. This might really almost harmonise,—better, at least, than the very summary combination of Detinger, who speaks of forty hours in the grave answering to the forty days after the resurrection.

Ver. 41, 42. But the sign of Jonah, too, will be in vain! Christ speaks here, in continuation of the prophecy, by no means merely of the unbelief in His person then manifesting itself, as one might be led wrongly to suppose from the καὶ ἰδοὺ ὧδε. He only goes out from the present, taking it also into his view as He does by saying: Now already in my words and works, which prove that the kingdom of God is come more than Jonah or Solomon did (ver. 28; chap. xi. 12—15, 21, 23). But He especially speaks of the last preaching of the Spirit after His resurrection, for He compares with it the preaching of Jonah *after* his deliverance. As the Ninevites did not see the sign of the prophet with their eyes, but believed and repented upon his *preaching* (εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα s. Winer's Gramm., p. 338), so, and not otherwise, was the risen Son of Man, whom they no longer saw with their eyes, a sign to the Jews in the preaching of the Spirit by the Apostles. That, moreover, the people of Nineveh may have known something of Jonah, from their expedition to Israel under Pul (2 Kings xv. 19, 20), and may have seen the fulfilment of his prophecy (2 Kings xiv. 25), at all events have heard from his own lips the wonderful history of his deliverance from the belly of hell—all this, although not declared in the narrative (Jon. iii.), may yet be presupposed as probable, from the great success which attended his preaching; it is intimated to some extent (ver. 5) in the words: *then they believed in God* —which may indicate in general, it is true, the ground of all repentance (to which Christ here also points), but may mean, at the same time, the miracle of divine power before narrated. Be that as it may, the comparison which Christ here makes implies, that the sign of Jonas was not in vain for the Ninevites, but this generation will not, in like manner, receive unto repentance the preaching concerning the resurrection of the Son of Man, although powerfully attested by the Holy Spirit.[1]

Greater than Jonas! greater than Solomon! If such a comparison of the Lord from heaven, who is over all, with children

[1] At all events Christ will least of all say what Lange strangely understands Him to say, viz., that the Messiah is come even as Jonas came —a stranger, a poor, unknown, nameless man, attesting himself *solely* by the power of his inner life! For he plainly speaks of something *future*.

of the earth, of the incomparable One with those who are altogether as nothing before Him, and who in reality derive all that they have only from Him, is, on the one hand, an expression of condescension and love, asking in sadness, Am I less than those, that you despise me so?—on the other, the propriety of the comparison is based on the divine consecration, which exalted Jonah and Solomon into types of Christ. Where Christ, in His own history or in that of His kingdom, points to histories in the Old Testament with a *like as* (ch. xxiv. 37; John iii. 14), there, in every case, is a resemblance not arbitrary and only then superadded, but one already prepared in the type. As the typical explanation, *like as Jonas was in the fish's belly*,[1] preceded the affirmation, *a greater than Jonas is here!*—so does the following comparison with Solomon presuppose an entirely parallel *like as*, *i.e.*, in like manner, a typical reference to Christ of the person, power, wisdom, and glory of Solomon, of all that characterises him as Solomon. If it was fit for Solomon to be placed in comparison with all the children of the east, with Egyptians, and with all heathen poets (1 Kings iv. 30, 31), so it is fit for Christ Himself only to say: *a greater* than Solomon. Only in the sphere of sacred history, at least in types which but faintly shadow Him forth, does He find His like, *i.e.*, such as are worthy even of being mentioned side by side with Him, with a, Here is one greater! We find even in the Old Testament, in Nathan's prophecy, and in the Psalms founded upon it, how Solomon's reign of peace, his building the Temple, his splendour, his marriage, point prophetically to the future; here, in addition to these, it is especially his *wisdom* that is spoken of, as Matth. xiii. 16 points back to 1 Kings x. 8. The queen of the South is not so much placed in antithesis as a woman to the *ἄνδρες Νινευῖται* (which indeed is only = אַנְשֵׁי נִינְוֵה), but, by way of climax, as one who came even from the ends of the earth, from the far coast of the foreign country that bounds the known world,[2] to seek out the anointed of the Lord who was so much

[1] With which *ὥσπερ ἦν οὕτως ἔσται*, moreover, the veritable reality of all that is recorded of the prophet, as corresponding to the real history of Christ, is maintained and proven.

[2] As already Homer called the Aethiopeans "the farthest out among men"

renowned, while Jonas came to the Ninevites to their own country.

We may certainly, however, apply the words of Christ in the widest sense, and, taking into view all the renowned names of wise, and all the wonderful destinies of remarkable men, all the missions and preachings confirmed by signs of whatever kind, say: Here is a greater than any Jonas-miracle! Here is a greater than any Solomon of his nation and time! For the history of Him who, by the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour, is the miracle of all miracles in the world's history for every one who asks a sign; the words of the Word are wisdom itself for all who enquire after wisdom and earnestly seek it. What then shall we say of the unbelieving generation of fools in Christendom, who esteem the fables of the heathen and the histories of the world's heroes more remarkable than the cross and the victory of Christ? who run after this or that ancient or modern "hero," or "classic," or "genius," and say: Here is one almost as great—or, again, Here is one really as great, or, finally, Here is one greater than Christ! As the excellent Dannhauer on the text exclaims, in reference to his own time: "Carthusians and Flagellants shall *stand up in the judgment* against the philosophers of this day, and condemn them." That which Christ has said in chap. x. 15, and xi. 22, 24, He here again says more strongly, from another point of view: as the Gentiles who, till then, remained impenitent, have a more tolerable judgment than Israel, so at last shall those who have repented, who sought, even from afar, the truth of God which appeared in the midst of Israel, *condemn* Israel by their example—in that great judgment in which all of every country and time shall appear together, and all the guilty, besides the protocol which they themselves have written, shall be confronted with all witnesses for their conviction, whose conduct cries out with reference to them: Might you not also have done so, and even much more? The last sign of the Messiah, then, will not be that Israel shall judge the heathen, and rain fire and brimstone upon the Romans, but that the believing heathen world shall condemn Israel. Chap. viii. 11, 12; xxi. 43, (Rom. ii. 27.) The Nineveh of this Jonah will be Rome, whose power bows before the sign of the cross, and Greece will seek and find

in this Solomon the true wisdom. But as for this evil and adulterous generation—its *latter end* will be terribly worse than any former destruction and judgment, as is now shown in ver. 43 to ver. 45. And why so? "Because thou hast not known the day of thy visitation!" Luke xix. 44.

This transitional idea, which is only to be pre-supposed in Matthew's epitomized collection of Christ's discourses, is given by Luke xi. 33, 36, as having been also spoken by Christ; for these words in Luke stand plainly in close connection with what goes before, and are there, where several transpositions occur, to be introduced between ver. 23 and 24. They are again a repetition from the Sermon on the Mount, (as at ver. 33), and need no further interpretation here. We have only to observe the connexion here, according to which, what is meant to be said is: The light of my preaching shines even now clearly enough, and after the sign of Jonas will be set still more clearly on the candlestick, only the blindness whose light has become darkness, sees it not. Εἰς κρυπτήν may be the Hebrew idiom for the neuter, or may mean really a crypta, a concealed passage or vault, the sense remains the same. The ἀστραπή ver. 36, is equivalent to φέγγος before, purposely, however, expressed more strongly, in order to mark that the light does not struggle through with difficulty, but, victorious over the darkness, instantaneously illumines everything. These words, spoken in a spirit of mingled sadness and kindness, and only hypothetically, of a complete illumination by the light[2] of God, now only conceived of as an ideal, contrast all the more fearfully with the dark closing picture in Matthew, to which we must now turn.

Ver. 43, 45. The words are a *parable*, in which Christ (an evident proof of the unity of these discourses), turns back at the end to the beginning of his address; he takes the casting out of the devil from an individual demoniac as the figure, in so far as he announces an aggravated return of the evil one. It thereby becomes worse with this man than it was before, and so will it be also with this generation! It is the same generation, of course, that was spoken of from ver. 39 onwards, although besides (which shows the

[1] In this case to be written κρύπτην. Euthymius: ἀπόκρυφον οἰκίαν.

[2] On the sense of which we have already expressed ourselves at Matth. vi. 22.

truth of the interpretation that refers the words only to it), the beginners in the faith (ver. 23), may also take warning from such a threatening prophecy. Thou hast Beelzebub! said the masters in Israel to him. He has patiently refuted them, kindly warned them, sharply rebuked them; now, at the conclusion of his address, announcing the end of the people, he has come so far as to retort upon them: This evil generation is *the great demoniac*, in regard to whom all previous casting out will at last appear to have been vain. As before, at ver. 29, mankind as a whole was represented as Satan's *house* and household, so now it is especially Israel, viewed collectively as his residence, and as having fallen anew by their own guilt. We will just examine the details of the parable, that we may then see more clearly its application.

The unclean spirit which dwells in the demoniac, as is supposed by way of parable, is still to be understood as one of the many subordinate demons, and not the prince of them himself (who, in Mark iii. 30, has the same general title). He is in reality *gone out* of the man, which presupposes an expulsion by the power of God.[1] Christ, we might say with special design, accumulates in a few words strong and massive features, taken from the natural history of the devil, as it lay open before him, so that in all future time it might not be thought that he spake only according to Jewish superstition, and that he drew the figure for representing world-historical realities from unreal representations, springing from human delusion! Indeed (as the excellent Stein on Luke here also admits), he glorifies his *wisdom* precisely in this, that he was able to graft the loftiest truths upon erroneous popular conceptions. The expelled spirit wanders about through *dry places*, districts without water, and therefore without human houses or inhabitants. Such waste places are the devils' dwelling place when they are not in and among men; as we find not only in passages of the apocrypha, as Tob. viii. 3;

[1] It is by no means *mere* appearance that is here spoken of, as if the malady were overcome, as if by the healing of the demoniac damage were done also to the "principle of evil itself" in the man (as Neander understands it.) Every casting out of the devil is an actual step towards improvement, and even in the application afterwards to the generation of this time, this holds perfectly true.

Bar. iv. 35, but even in Rev. xviii. 2 (according to prophetic representations, Is. xiii. 21, 22, xxxiv. 14), and as is here in perfect earnestness confirmed by Christ. The ejected devils abide willingly at least upon the earth, as they are still at liberty to do, and have a certain pleasure in all that is waste and desolate upon it, in ruined paradises and overthrown glory. Then impelled by inward pain he *seeks rest i.e.*, first of all, a temporary place of abode and settlement, in which Christ—(to whose mind passages of Scripture are always immediately present, inasmuch as all his thoughts and knowledge take their rise from the Holy Scriptures)—has again evidently Is. iv. 14 in his eye.[1] But when the word of the prophecy, less distinctly expressing the meaning which lies under the figure, speaks of the finding of rest (מְצִיאָה מָנוֹחַ, LXX. also *ἀνάπαυσιν*), Christ here, as it were, justifies and confirms the word, inasmuch as he goes on to say: and findeth it *not!* For how can a devil find rest, which the creature can find only in God? He has lost it for ever, he seeks it in vain, in all waste places, which otherwise please him; he seeks it especially in vain there where God the Lord of creation will have His rest, and where, therefore, the devil also, if he can force an entrance, finds himself relatively best—namely, in man. Therefore, the desire soon returns upon him to look after his own more peculiar *house*. He declares his intention *ἐπιστρέψω*, which he cannot long leave unexecuted, for he is always willing to return if only he can. As, in ver. 29, it was Satan's *house*, as a whole, that was spoken of, in which individual men are the household furniture, so now the same expression is, with equal truth, applied internally to the individual; every man in a devil's power is his house. He impudently speaks of the house as *his own* from the first—he knows still all the secret passages in it, as in a stronghold which he had left, and speaks, like a true devil, as if he had only *gone out* of his own free will, not confessing that he was forced out. And when he thus comes, how does he find it in the case here supposed? *Swept and garnished*, as both

[1] Moreover, a perplexing proof for those who too hastily throw many things among the Jewish fables, that by the צִיִּים and אִיִּים וְשָׂעִיר, and לִילִית, hellish spirits are actually indicated, although not the rabbinical Lilith.

evangelists have it. But would not this be contrary to the nature of the unclean spirit who likes to dwell only in the filth of sin? Alas! *this* garnishing, which is here meant, is to him filthy and agreeable enough; for it is the outward garnishing of hypocrisy, it is a sweeping with the besom of Pharisaism which makes worse that which was already evil, in proof of which compare Luke ii. 39, 40. In Matthew there is still the term *σχολάζοντα*, affording a certain explanation of the other two words before which it stands, and which designedly includes at once the figure and its explanation; in the figure, *empty*, open for free access, in the explanation *idle*, left unguarded through indolence, security, hypocritical conceit, and thus in the best way prepared and adorned for the devil.[1] This is a discovery going beyond his expectation, and in which he will have his pleasure and labour not alone. Then, he goes away once more (not concerned lest such a house should meanwhile be lost to him), and takes as a reinforcement seven other devils who are *worse* than himself. This does not mean worse in respect of wickedness (*nequiores, sceleratiores*), for in this, indeed, there is no difference possible between devil and devil, but worse in their power to destroy, and in their consequent obstinacy. (Chap. xvii. 21). *Stronger* ones are meant, but, because from them greater evil (*i.e.* in the explanation, worse sin), follows for the poor man, Christ speaks of *worse* ones. The seven dwell there instead of the one, are no more driven out, and the relapse of him who was once healed is worse than the first illness.

Who is this man? Christ explains his parable unasked. Such will be the last end of this evil generation! Consequently, the end of the story here narrated will be realised in the then existing last generation of Israel, which fills up the measure of guilt, and draws down judgment upon itself. We know now how it happened. But inasmuch as Christ has put the *ἔσχατα* in opposition to the *πρώτοις*, and begun the parable with the actual

[1] Braune, here falsely understanding it in the good sense of preparedness for receiving the Holy Ghost, entirely mistakes the *irony* of the expression. (Stud. u. Krit. 1847, ii. 390). It is truly not the beginning of regeneration that is here spoken of, in which Satan might yet again find room for working, but it is the offence of the hypocrite in false security.

casting out of the one, first devil, we observe, at the same time, that he takes into one view the collective history of this entire people, from the fathers downward. What was their first devil? It was rude heathenish idolatry. This God truly cast out by the Babylonian exile, and this certainly was in itself something good, it was a result obtained for the time. But soon again in indolent security they adorned the house which was mistakenly supposed to have been cleansed for all time coming. And, the more that their pride recoiled from idols, with so much the more corruption and inward idolatry must they commit sacrilege in the true sanctuary (Rom. ii. 22); in Pharisaism there grew up a γενεὰ μοιχαλίς, which went a whoring after idols worse than the former. The seven devils were not merely on their way, they were already come when Christ spake; still he speaks prophetically (ἔσται), because he has in view the last *manifestation* of this state, the outbreak of the destruction which awaited the people in judgment. Nor is it to be overlooked, what Von Meyer in his striking note here says, that as another application of this many-sided parable, the ineffectual casting out which is followed only by a worse relapse, means, at the same time, the coming in of the kingdom in Christ (ver. 28). The manifold good, both in the sphere of knowledge and of will, which was actually called forth by the labours of Christ for a time, might once more have effected a thorough cleansing of the people, but this also was in vain. In the period between the ascension of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem, especially towards the end of it, this nation shows itself, one might say, as if possessed by seven thousand devils. It is judged, destroyed, blinded; its judgment is the great type of history for the last judgment of the whole world, and in its present blindness it must even as the people of God, without knowing or willing it, serve at least as a warning and prophetic parable to the world.

For we will find that the same holds good of Christendom, of those who are outwardly called taken collectively. The apostolical age is followed by the setting up of the golden calf in the Romish Church; even idolatry properly so called breaks out on every side. The return from the exile corresponds in part to the Reformation; nor have we far to look for the Pharisaism of Lutheranism. At present, indeed, everything is more complicated, more spiritual, and on a scale of more complete develop-

ment, still the ground-features remain the same, although Pharisees and Sadducees, on this side and on that, in many ways change places in and out of the still remaining faith of the letter. Enough, that "in the midst of all the culture that exists," with all the sweeping and garnishing of the house by art, science, illumination, industry, and speculation, there is already something worse at the bottom than a mere Laodicean σχολάζειν. How one who has been cleansed only with the besom of an outward reformation, who is only outwardly civilized, is not safe from coarse excesses, as a savage, outwardly broken in, may yet easily fall back into wildness, and the nature which was washed only on the outside revenge itself all the more violently and filthily—the first revolution in the land of civilization has begun practically to show, and as an additional impending proof of the theory, Germany, also more spiritual in its sins, as the kernel of the Christian nations, begins in like manner to develop itself.[1] What will it be when the ἔσχατα comes, the last unbelief of completed antichristianism, the Man of Sin.

Finally, this grandly prophetic parable finds always its true application also in the individual, with whom the same may and must take place, if, after a first cure and conversion, he becomes σχαλάζων for the returning devil. Every relapse brings a worse state (John v. 14); but the complete relapse of the regenerated person (which the relapses of Israel and of Christendom *shadow forth* as a whole, just as they are really *exemplified* in many an individual, and of which Christ here speaks generally according to the innermost kernel of the word), such a relapse makes the destruction irreparable, it makes the person ripe for judgment, and is another, nay, the most fearful expression of that unpardonable sin spoken of above. Hence the Apostle in 2 Pet. ii. 20—22 plainly refers to this parable of Christ. Οὕτως ἔσται—the Saviour, as judge, has declared respecting his whole nation, and it has been fulfilled before the eyes of the world. A still more awful οὕτως ἔσται remains literally as the ἔσχατον in this, and the future world, respecting the *evil generation*, most properly so called, of the lost, whose destruction and judgment are prophetically attested by all the fearfully ending catastrophes of

[1] This was written in the year 1844—what will the reader now say to it?

the men and generations of the Old and New Testament people of God in the world's history, as parables which already, more or less, carry their truth in themselves.

CHRIST'S MOTHER AND BRETHREN.

(Matth. xii. 48—50; Mark iii. 33—35; Luke viii. 21.)

Again, a contrast similar to chap. xi. 23—28. Often as the future judge must cast down to hell by his word of truth, his Saviour-heart can yet never forget that he is come into the world not to judge, but to save. A gracious word coming immediately after the fearful denunciation against the seed of Abraham, which had become a generation of vipers—an expression of the deepest, tenderest, feeling of love, which still was in his heart even when he spoke words of anger, and which was called forth by an intimation that was made to him—a word also for us, which is more to be *felt* than understood. He had brought his address to the people to a close; would he have been silent then, or what more would he have said? Meanwhile, he is interrupted by the intimation, that his mother and brethren had already been standing a long time before the house, inquiring after him, endeavouring to come to him in order to say something to him. We should never have thought of conjecturing what this was, did we not read it with astonishment in Mark (whose account we must regard as parallel, in opposition to Ebrard's harmony which is not always correct). Surrounded by the throng of people, he had found neither time nor space for eating, and carried along by holy zeal, he had spoken without rest—the evangelists giving only the substance of what he had said. His kinsfolk[1] become apprehensive about him, especially the unbelieving brothers, who likely had not yet desisted from going about with the humble first-born, as they were wont to do in Nazareth, who, again at a later period (John vii. 3), are represented as giving him advice, and who here, most naturally, from the human point of view,

[1] For this must at all events be the meaning of οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ Mark ver. 21, because ver. 31 again takes up the discourse with οὖν. Mark iv. 16 οἱ περὶ αὐτόν is something quite different.

are for exercising their right as brothers, and even the *mother* stands, on this occasion at least, passively on their side. They will stop him, *seize him*, (*κρατῆσαι αὐτὸν*) for they think and say; *ὅτι ἐξέστη*. Let us interpret this as gently as we may, it remains a strong word:[1] he does too much, forgets all moderation (2 Cor. v. 13), exerts himself beyond his power, and beyond what is proper; certainly equivalent to *he is beside himself*, out of his senses, knows not what he is doing, so that we have to interfere! Mark brings it expressly in connexion with the words of the scribes: He has Beelzebub! in order to show us at one glance all that happened from *friends* and *foes* to Christ who remains ever the same, and whom neither devilish blasphemy, nor the false love of men, was able to move. Perhaps he will even indicate that the friends of Christ heard the fearful word, and, at least, in a milder sense, applied it to him. But it is altogether contrary to the text (Mark ver. 22) to suppose, that the *Pharisees* also (on account of the many *paradoxes* which Christ uttered) had merely meant to say, and to spread abroad that he was out of his senses, crack-brained, not quite wise. "Possessed of a devil," and "out of his senses" are two very different things.[2] Christ was certainly in an unusual frame of awakened zeal, but He was quite *Himself*, he was fulfilling his work and office, viz., to speak the *word of God* to all who would, and should hear him, and so to speak as it was needful for them, for instruction, warning, and judgment. (What is recorded in Luke xi. 27, 28, also took place meanwhile). His zeal had just carried Him to the point of opening up a look into the fearful depths of destruction, from which he would willingly save those who are yet willing to hear and believe, when His mother and brethren according to the flesh, come in His way, and as his spirit in the *ἔκστασις*—which yet in reality was no *ἔκστασις*—well perceives, with a carnal request. What else can He feel and think, and therefore say, than what we read in Matth. and Mark. Away, perverse generation!

[1] Schleiermacher thought that this addition by Mark must always remain strange even when understood in the mildest possible sense—and therefore assigned it a place among those "accumulations and exaggerations which are so frequent in Mark.

[2] But to speak of *ecstacy* in Christ, as Sepp foolishly does, is folly; he was removed above ecstacy, though not above strong emotion.

Away, mother and brethren! I speak as long as I can for those who have ears to hear; for this am I sent, and I know that I do not speak in vain: here are those who hear Me,—these are My brethren, My sisters, and mother!

Thus faithfully speaks and acts the true High Priest Himself, according to the word of Moses, (Deut. xxxiii. 9, 10), which he wants to be realized in his followers, and thus does He set before us the brightest example of how we should conduct ourselves in reference to those *family importunities* which would often so dangerously depress the spirit. Raised above all concern about its appearing as if he disregarded filial duty and brotherly love, as if, in his prophetical and Messianic dignity, he was even ashamed of his humble relations (for only malice could thus interpret his words), he now repeats, evidently more strongly, what he had already said at Cana, inasmuch as the improper interference was here repeated in a stronger form. But the first sharply repelling word is immediately followed by that of unspeakable kindness, in which the mother and brothers are again embraced, according to which also the brothers, as soon as they believe on him, and become disciples of their brother, are then truly his brothers. Thus to shame them, and draw them to himself, belongs to the aim of his zeal, which is always lovingly wise, and considerate even in its hastiest expressions.[1] He extends the gracious hand of blessing and protection over his disciples, just as if some one would take them from him; he turns a kind look of love towards all who sat around him, (others, therefore, besides the Apostles or his outwardly decided followers, but not those also who were now standing in a hostile attitude towards him, all, in short, whose quiet sitting around the Master indicated that they were μαθητάς, who would learn and hear), and affectionately exclaims—*Behold my mother and my brethren!*

This is a precious word from the heart of the First-born. It

[1] He answers *in the first place*, indeed, the person who had addressed Him and perhaps gladly so, in order thereby at length to put a stop to His severe discourse—but not *this person alone*. Such sayings were retained and repeated to every one whom they concerned, here certainly in a short time to the kinsfolk of Christ—and this Christ knew when He spake the words.

means first of all simply: *I love them as* much as my mother and brethren (in which, at the same time, the natural affection of a son and brother, which was seemingly disowned becomes again apparent), nay, more than those who are such after the flesh, inasmuch as *they are* such in a truer sense. There lies in this certainly, as coming from the Son of Man still dwelling on earth, *something* of that *humility* which Timothy needed to be recommended to practise (1 Tim. v. 2), so that he should be able to say of the aged women: Behold I speak to them as to mothers! But it has a deeper meaning, and expresses the actual spiritual relationship, above all those of a carnal kind, for which Christ would prepare, and to which he would elevate his people, which he already sees in the weak beginners, and makes them brethren, inasmuch as he calls them so. Heb. ii. 11, 12. But are we to take in this sense not merely brothers and sisters, but also *mother*, as it stands at the beginning, and again with the highest emphasis at the end of the address? By all means. Zinzendorf's naive circumlocution: "I reflect that I was a child, their race is my mother"—belongs here quite to the surface. Whosoever receives him has in heart conceived and born him, is himself a Mary, as also Mary only thereby became and continues to be his mother. (Luke xi. 28.) The congregation of all the brethren (see also Ps. xxii. 22), is collectively the true Mary,[1] a presentiment of which profound truth forms the concealed ground of the shocking Mariolatry of that church which exalts itself above Christ.

But a dear friend whom I will not here name, has very far forgot himself when, in a sermon he makes Christ say: They are to me as *father and mother!* This he could not say. Where in the Scripture, after Luke ii. 49, does Christ speak of any other father or mother than the one whom he here also names, his Father in heaven? The mystery of His miraculous conception is in all His words plainly attested, even although there had been no account of it, no dogma concerning it. Brother, sister,

[1] As already Is. vii. 14 the Old Testament Church, David's house and Zion, the virgin whose faith at last conceives him in Mary. See Hofmann, Weiss. und Erfullung i. 222: and compare Micah iv. 10, v. 2.

and *mother:* these words express the compass and limits of the relationship of the Son of God and Man with the human race.[1] This relationship has already been laid open to the whole race by his birth in the flesh, already involved in the grace offered to all; but it is only truly completed in every one *who does the will of God* (Mark), the will of His Father in heaven. This means in its completion, the utmost demands of the law laid down in Matt. vii. 21, for the beginning, however, so as kindly to draw to higher attainments, not more than is expressed in John vi. 40. Those who *hear* God's word in faith are to *do* it, and shall do it (Luke viii. 21); the hearing and learning receives and has already in itself all the grace necessary for keeping it. (Luke xi. 28). With a kindness that hastens to meet its object, Christ already adjudging and appropriating, *promises* everything to the good *beginning*, which, alas, is so often not a going onwards to the end. (Rom. viii. 29). On the other side—for this, as always, is the other side of the judging word of grace—he who does *not* hear and do, Christ knows him not, even though after the flesh he were born of his mother, nay, were His mother herself!

THE SEVEN PARABLES.

(Matt. xiii.)

The evangelist opens up to us here, just as in the Sermon on the Mount, a scene in the teaching and preaching of Christ evidently complete in itself, and quite remarkable in its kind. On the same day on which what is narrated in the preceding chapter

[1] By the way, this *connexion* of the brothers and sisters with the mother in the mouth of Christ, and frequently in the Gospel history, is at the same time the *most decisive* proof that the "brethren" were actually children of His mother. (Ps. lxix. 9.) Yet not the sole proof. The sainted Von Meyer, unconvinced indeed with many to the last, asked me, "Why is it not said, The mother of Christ and *her children, sons,*" and how could relations be otherwise named in the original languages than "*brethren.*" But the answer is easy. Christ remains the centre-point of all relation and designation. *His* mother, *His* brethren. Relations must, at least in Luke and John, be called ἀνεψιοί or such like. See my introduction to the epistle of Jude.

took place, Christ goes out of the house (chap. xii. 16), and sets himself by the sea-side, probably to seek rest and refreshment. But the ὄχλοι πολλοὶ gather around him anew, and in order to escape from this new throng he enters into the ship (usually kept in readiness for him by Peter or others), and because the people remain standing on the shore, he immediately, without resting, begins again to speak to them. So *much* has he to say to the world and to judge of it (John viii. 26), and from his exhaustless treasure to bring forth things new and old. (Afterwards, ver. 52). He has just been speaking *parables*, and in *parables* he begins anew to teach, in calmly instructive *parables*, such as correspond to his frame of mind at that time, seeking rest in vain, whereby, at the same time, he composes his own soul to the *survey* of his whole office and kingdom, after the sharply judging prophecies in chap. xii.

Already does the plur. ἐν παραβολαῖς lead us to expect more than *one* parable as spoken at that time. When, after certain intermediate words, narrated by Matthew, addressed to his disciples, (showing wherefore he spake to the people in *parables*), and after the explanation of the first parable, we read (ver. 24), that he addressed *another* parable to them—this certainly means that it was on the same day (ver. 3). Consequently vers. 31 and 33 are connected in the same way with ver. 3; and ver. 34, therefore, coincides again with vers. 3 and 10; ταῦτα πάντα ἐλάλησεν. If now, ver. 36, Christ having returned to the house, explains the second parable to the disciples, and the evangelist, without any mark of separation, connects with these words a three times repeated πάλιν ὁμοία (just as before at ver. 18, he connects the first explanation with the first question concerning his reason in general for speaking in parables), then a question whether they had understood *all these things* (again, as at ver. 34), and finally, ver. 53, (just as at chap. vii. 28) closes the whole: *when he had finished these parables*—it is impossible with all this before us, otherwise to read and to understand the writer, than that Christ, on one and the same day, on which many other things had occurred, consequently in pretty quick succession, spoke the *seven* parables, the first four outside on the sea to the people, the last three in the house to the disciples. With this agrees Mark iv. (see especially ver. 2)—although all the parables

are not there given, while another is narrated which Matthew has not, showing that Christ indeed spake *many things* on that day, from which Matthew selects the seven *parables* which contained the real plan and order of his teaching at that time. With this Luke viii. likewise agrees, although there only the first parable is recorded. Luke xiii. 18–21 might indeed be an insertion, without regard to time, of what was said on that day, but it may quite as well indicate a repetition of that parable at another time. At all events, there is not the slightest reason for going against the decisive words of *Matthew*, of which, in order not to break the *Scripture*, we cannot possibly make up our minds to say, in spite of their savouring so much of the letter, that "not much value is to be attached to them." If harmonies cannot reconcile other passages with this, we must still *go out* from the firm data given in Matth. vers. 3, 10, 24, 31, 33, 34, 36, 51, 53, and judge of other passages according to these.[1]

The scene in Matthew is also complete in itself, in so far as the surrounding objects furnish the material of the parables. Christ, looking from the ship, saw before him the fields and lands—these are naturally taken to represent the people standing upon them. *Seed*—this continues to be the ground-material variously applied of the first four parables, for as, on the one hand, the *leaven* stands closely related to the farther history of the ripened fruit, so, on the other hand, it represents in itself the penetrating, renovating power of the wonderful seed. Another quite similar application takes place in the first of the three esoteric parables ver. 44, (which, in general, go deeper than the others) inasmuch as, just as the seed was viewed as a leaven, so also may it be viewed as a *treasure* committed to the earth and concealed in it. Now, however, the spiritualized idea becomes quite detached from this range of figures so manifoldly applied; when the transition is made from the *treasure* in general to the precious *pearl*, we can hardly fail (seeing that pearls are fished from the *sea*, and, at that time, especially from the Arabian gulf), to mark that Christ in this parable returns to the place from which he speaks,

[1] It belongs not to our work to refute the confusion in Ebrard's note, p. 371. This arises, first of all, from his understanding, Mark ver. 33, as a *parenthetical* (?) remark, and then also from his reading Matth. vers. 53 and 54, in an unwarrantably strict connexion.

as, in the concluding parable of the net, it is made to connect in the closest manner with the ship of his fishers of men.[1] Thus, between the shore and the sea, (vers. 1, 2), the circle of figures forms itself, in which, as we shall soon see in the interpretation, each succeeding parable connects itself with the foregoing as a further development of it.[2]

As, notwithstanding of all the profoundness of meaning which belongs to the figurative language taken from the operations of God in nature to represent the kingdom of God, the single parable can yet never present every side of the subject with perfect suitableness, but must leave out of view other sides of it which do not enter into the *tertium comparationis*, so it was most consistent with the wisdom of Christ to deliver his instructions here by means of several parables *supplementing each other*, thus to awaken and exercise the understanding for parables, and to place the many-sidedness of the truth in opposition to the one-sided misunderstanding of it. But this is not all. By turning the significance of the figures from one side of the subject to another, his words have a *prophetic* import as he advances into the signified "mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven," and this remarkable cycle of parables has in it an organic progress internally developing itself in the same way as the Sermon on the Mount in its kind. Here, as there, if we first of all attend to the extreme points, we have the first establishment and the final separation of the Church of Christ, the beginning of preaching and the final judgment in the first and last parables; between these the line of connection will have to be drawn,—we conjecture it and find it too. But it is not (and Bengel is here at fault) the reference to consecutive periods in the history of the church that forms the principal thread on which we may lay hold; for Christ will here, in the first instance, not *prophesy* but *teach*. The prophecy must,

[1] As already in my Hints for the believing understanding of the Scripture, I. Collection, p. 46 ss., I expressed myself in almost the same terms on the connection and sequence of the seven parables; in which also are additional remarks on the designedly instructive change of figures according to which seed and field, birds, leaven, appear with different interpretations.

[2] Which transitions might be still more plainly effected through the medium of subordinate parables, one of which Mark gives; this, indeed, *may* have been the only one of this kind.

from the nature of the case, appear as a result in the back-ground, in so far as the history of the church is nothing else than the doctrine of the church gradually developing itself,—its own manifestation. We understand, therefore, the order of the thought on a survey of these parables (which, indeed, only the interpretation of the particulars can make quite clear), to be what will presently be stated, and we are not afraid of being charged by the truly intelligent with any artificial refinement.

The objection, moreover, urged for example also by Neander, that so many parables following each other could only have the effect of distracting the minds of the hearers by an over-fulness of matter, and was therefore not in accordance with Christ's method of teaching, appears to us to have little weight, especially when we consider that all the seven parables were not spoken to the people, and that intervals of time for reflection are marked.

The four parables to the people, and the three that follow, addressed to the disciples, are one, and yet different. The first speaks more exoterically of the outward form and development of the kingdom as a whole; their fundamental twofold idea is, in its unity, *sowing and harvest.* This divides itself again into two propositions, to which the two connected larger parables and the two smaller correspond; the seed of the word brings forth fruit only in a few, yet such seed will develop itself to a full harvest. The first parable of the different kinds of ground expresses the first proposition as a presently existing fact; the first thing is, that the whole field is sown, and the springing of this seed is the beginning of the Church. The representation,—which goes out from the preaching that had just been addressed to the people, according to which the parable, as it were, describes and explains itself,—is still to be understood quite outwardly: *So it happens*—the ground of this being not yet given. Not merely the complete unfruitfulness, but also the seeming growth of the seed for a longer or a shorter time, so that it becomes manifest only at a later stage that there is to be no harvest, consequently the *uncertain mixture* of the seed before the eyes of men is already indicated. This now will awaken and draw out the question, *Whence* comes this condition of the land, and *to what* will this state and course of things lead? The twofold answer is given in the second parable, which thereby also makes an advance, in

respect of time, to the approaching, continuing, and increasing mixture in the Church. The continuance of the kingdom, after the Son of Man has sowed the seed, is certainly therein presupposed. But as the question, Whence are the tares? pointing back, includes in itself, at the same time, a previous one, viz.,—Whence is it that all is not good land?—so also does the answer: The enemy has done this! conceal within itself, at the same time, a reference back to the first and foremost sowing of tares in God's field. This parable, likewise, already points forward to the separation necessarily coincident with the harvest, and denotes therefore the *reason* and *aim* of that which the first parable had laid down merely as a fact.

From the conclusion results quite naturally the second principal glance at the *full harvest* to which, notwithstanding, the corn is to develop itself. As before, the individual person was represented first as the ground, then as the seed itself, so now, by a new turn of the figure, the entire kingdom, the entire company of the children of the kingdom, is compared to the single seed-corn. The small seed-corn grows or *develops itself* (ver. 32 takes up ver. 30, according to the ground-idea of the preceding parable in Mark) by virtue of the life-power inherent in it as *seed*. This wonderful seed, however, is at the same time as a leaven (bearing within it from the first the nature of the last product) which leavens the ground itself, changes it to corn and fruit according to its kind; it *penetrates* that into which it is put, or *spreads itself out* by virtue of the *quickening power* inherent in it. Mustard seed and leaven then represent the development and spread of the Church upon earth, which no mixture can hinder. Here, it will be observed, an advance is made toward the deeper *internal* truth, thus preparing the way for the three *esoteric* parables, although, in the first place, the reference is still mainly to the external history, as it will represent itself. Each parable belongs to every time; but the first may be referred chiefly to the time of Christ and the Apostles (the sowing), the second to the period after the departure of the Apostles (when the tares, properly speaking, appear), the third finds a preliminary fulfilment under Constantine, the fourth, in the leavening of the popular life through the influence of the Catholic Church. Thus we have presented here a general survey of the history of

the kingdom, as we might truly say (according to Eph. iii. 18), in the *breadth* of the seed scattering itself over the field of the world (fore-shadowed, at least, by the preaching of the Apostles), in the *length* of the time of growing till the end of the harvest, in the *height* of imperial power which represents itself (at least outwardly already as heavenly) in the edifice of the Church overshadowing all kingdoms and nations, finally, in the *depth* to which everything susceptible is penetrated by the new, leavening, and salting life.

But precisely in this depth is implied the truth which belongs to the esoteric doctrine for the Apostles, that it is not properly in the Church at large as such that the kingdom of heaven forms and completes itself, but in *each individual*. The outward history of the Church, as a whole, is itself again only a type and parable setting forth this truth, as was already hinted at vers. 32, 33. This is the characteristic distinction of the three last parables whose ground-idea, with special reference to the individual righteous ones who are at a future time to be separated from the rest, is now rather, the necessity of *renunciation* and *trial*; this is the true seed for the true harvest in the heart of man. This points, at the same time, to a still later period in the history of the Church, when, after the outward spread *over*, and internal mingling *with*, kingdoms and peoples, the renouncing struggle and victory of the Church, which is to be proved to be true, is more properly called forth; it points to the second principal period, the character of which is this spiritual development from within, as, in the first, it was the unfolding of the Christian principle. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like—that is as much as to say: Farther on,—the nearer it approaches to the harvest and the separation—it will be like. The *treasure* in the field, and the *pearl* are again closely related, and yet different, just as the mustard-seed and the leaven. Both speak of the *renunciation* of everything else for the one thing (necessary from the first, but, in this future state of things, ever more necessary). The treasure in the field represents it as a thing *hid*, no longer known to the possessor of the field, which, however, by virtue of newly revealed grace, may be found even by those *who do not seek it*; the pearl, on the other hand, represents it as a thing *precious* beyond everything else, which is entirely overlooked, and is obtained only by

those who *come to know it, and who seek it aright.* In the first parable, therefore, the treasure stands first as a thing present, and then comes the man who *finds it:* the other begins with the merchant who *seeks* pearls. If the Reformation may be taken to denote the turning point of the two periods in the history of the Church before named, then the most striking application would be that the treasure hid in the field was then found anew, the treasure of the *word,* and, therewith, of the *true Church* which has its life from and in the word, as Luther found the Bible in the cloister, and in addition to this the mystic theology. In the period of the final falling away, however, which is now near at hand, if we are not already living in it, it will concern true seekers, such as at least are dissatisfied with all the false tinsel wares of the market, and inferior goods, to find out the one true possession which lies ever hid and unknown among all sorts of merchandise, and then—giving up all for it—to buy it.

Finally, the last parable speaks of the separation and *trial* at the end, as was already preintimated in the second; it forms, however, at the same time a complete conclusion to the series of parables, and points back again to the beginning. If all the previous figures which followed each other (seed, leaven, treasure, pearl) were yet developed from each other, we have here at last the transition, for which the way was already prepared by the pearl, from the parables of the shore and the land to the parable of the *sea.* The *sowing,* from which the whole series started, appears here as a catching. Thus the net is again, in the first place, *the preached word,* just as the seed,[1] but it is the word in so far as it founds a *church* (the sowing makes a field to be the ground of the sower)—in so far as it unites individuals in a fellowship founded on the word and its effects, although it should be a merely outward fellowship, of which no account is taken at the last. Consequently it is the outward, mixed Church itself, for the contents of which the separation draws near. If Christ began with Himself as the first true sower, he here comprehends his Apostles within his view, in whom He sees all His future fishers of men, and workmen in

[1] For in all parables, as Roos observes, Christ ever tells us to look back from the great thing set before us to the *beginning* of it (which, in like manner, goes on reproducing itself, through all times).

His kingdom, whose net will bring together fish of every kind until *the angels* make the separation.

Let any one now say whether, in this cursory survey, we have arbitrarily put all this into the seven parables, or whether it proceeds from the evangelist's having of himself brought together and arranged them with a view to this, or whether, which is the only thing that remains conceivable for us, Christ Himself has not originally spoken, at one time, and in this profound connexion, *all these things, these parables.*

WHEREFORE IN PARABLES?

Matth. xiii. 11—17; Mar. iv. 11, 12, 21—25; Luke viii. 10, 16—18.

These statements of Christ to his disciples about his speaking in parables we think it right to place together, ere we proceed to the uninterrupted exposition of the parables themselves. The question of the disciples (ver. 10) plainly shows, that his addressing the people thus publicly and at greater length, without any proper explanation, in nothing but finished parables (ver. 34) was something new and strange to them. The *beginning* this mode of address denotes, further, a later development of his relations to the people, as, according to Mark xii. 1, at a still later period Christ began to speak also to the Scribes and Pharisees almost solely by parables. The right understanding of what Christ here says to his disciples will show the impossibility of supposing that this significant beginning of the enigmatic mode of address, which was designed as a judgment upon hardened hearers, belongs to an earlier period before the Sermon on the Mount.[1] "Why speakest thou unto them in *parables*?"

[1] As the excellent and well-meaning Ebrard, after a criticism too hastily completed, carries up to so early a period his otherwise well connected *Syndesm* G., which also contains the parables, solely on account of the "calling of Matthew," which *must*, he says, have taken place *before* the Sermon on the Mount. Here there is one internal reason against another, nay more than one against this single reason, and (as has been said at Matth. ix. 9) we can much more easily imagine another sense for that conclusive call, "Follow me!" than comprehend how Christ, in the severe address given in chap. xiii., could, even at

The *plural* here further implies, that Matthew inserts here proleptically what properly took place after several parables had been spoken, therefore after vers. 24—30. Yet *not after* he had returned to the house (ver. 36); for Mark informs us, after ver. 2, ἐν παραβολαῖς πολλά had gone before, then at ver. 10, that this esoteric intermediate address took place during a pause, when the people, satisfied for the time with a διδαχή which they had desired, withdrew, and left him again for a while *alone* or at rest. (This ἐγένετο καταμόνας of Mark, with which Luke ix. 18 is to be compared, is by no means the same as the ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν of Matthew, for we find in Mark afterwards a twice repeated καὶ ἔλεγεν, vers. 26, 30, to which ver. 33 belongs.) This, however, we may yet learn chiefly from Mark, that the μαθηταί who put the question were *not merely the twelve*, but, along with them, οἱ περὶ αὐτόν, others, followers who stood near to hear him and were enquiring after salvation; this remark we will find to be necessary in order not to misunderstand the opposition between the two classes of individuals of whom he speaks. "*Why* speakest thou to the people there without as we have not been accustomed to hear thee, addressing to them no plain word, but speaking of ground, rock, and thorns, and such like things, of which we can see well enough that they are *parables*, but nothing further? The people cannot surely understand them, since we as yet understand them quite as little!" To so welcome a question addressed to him in so friendly a spirit Christ willingly replies, and it might be said that the answer which he gives, only developes, properly speaking, the sense of that call which he had just addressed to the people: *He that hath ears to hear let him hear!* ver. 9, as vers. 16 and 17 shows. The ground-idea

the beginning, declare that the people were deaf, and then, notwithstanding, could address to them the Sermon on the Mount. A new proof, that without the most thorough exegesis of the discourses of Christ, the *harmony* must ever be liable to errors. Could then the enmity and impudence of the Pharisees have already been developed even to the extent of charging Christ with being in league with Beelzebub, before the Sermon on the Mount, or rather, could this latter have been spoken at so late a period, certainly in contradiction to its entire nature and significance? Alford, too, says quite rightly: the natural succession of things is against those who, as Ebrard, would place all this before the Sermon on the Mount.

is: Because *they (i.e.* the greater number at least) have no longer hearing ears and perceiving hearts to receive the plain and open word, therefore I hide it from them; *if haply they might yet thus be stirred up to give heed to it;* consequently, to awaken as much as possible every ear that yet hears, and as a deserved judgment on all who are thus dismissed![1] Christ must certainly, for a considerable time, have spoken in such a directly instructive manner, enlivened indeed with מְשָׁלִים, but still for the most part plain, as we find represented in the Sermon on the Mount, before he could pronounce such a judicial sentence as we find here upon the unsusceptible multitude, and could turn to parables because of their deaf ears.

Ver. 11. *The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven* (for which only Mark less correctly has—the mystery)—fit title and most general explanation of *all* the parables of Christ, and especially of those now before us. The kingdom of heaven is itself a mystery for the naturally earthly understanding, and, like earthly kingdoms, it has its *state secrets* which cannot, and ought not, to be cast before every one. When, on a frank and friendly approach being made, no feeling of loyalty shows itself, but rather a threatening of rebellion (and such on the whole had evidently now come to be the state of the people since the announcement of the Baptist, and such addresses of Christ as we find on the Sermon on the Mount), then it is wise and reasonable to draw a vail, which, however, is willingly removed whenever any faithful one wishes to join himself more nearly to the king. To this belongs the citation of Matth. ver. 35, the word of *the Lord* by the *prophet* Asaph (2 Chron. xxix. 30) in the 78th Psalm. It is altogether wrong, as even Matthew shows by his *formula citandi*, to say that Asaph himself in that place speaks in his own person; the עַמִּי and תּוֹרָתִי alike strongly testify against this; comp. ver. 5, and in the other

[1] Both are meant in and with each other. Roos well says: This condescension to which the Saviour was, as it were, constrained to stoop, was mingled with his holy anger. Again v. Gerlach: "A parable is like the pillar of cloud and fire, which turned the dark side to the Egyptians, the bright side to the people of the covenant; it is like a shell which keeps the precious kernel as well *for* the diligent as *from* the indolent."

Psalms of Asaph, l. 7, lxxxi. 9, 12. 14. God himself, by the prophet, explains the events which belonged to the history of his people as an unwritten תּוֹרָה, and their נִפְלָאוֹת as *parables* and *enigmas*. Matthew, then, with the deepest insight will here show, that Christ now spoke to the people not otherwise than he had done from the beginning, that the language of God the king of Israel had remained the same also after his manifestation in the flesh.[1] The κεκρυμμένα ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου חִידוֹת מִנִּי קֶדֶם are the secrets of his eternal counsel, already expressed by the Creator in the sign-language of nature, and the creature, while these divine parabolic utterances of Christ constitute in Israel a new circle of figures, touching more closely on sin and redemption. Here in the first seven principal parables they are drawn *chiefly* from *nature*, in which the figures are already given as expressions of the hidden truth (not arbitrarily used for this purpose); in his later parables (as already here at the same time) he draws them more and more from Israel's prophetic circle of types, when he opens his mouth as well to reveal as to hide, in figures of inexhaustible meaning, the depths of the plan of his kingdom. The heavenly sowing on earthly ground, the outgoing of all efficacy from the word, the conflict of the eternal will of love with creature freedom, the thorns of the lost paradise beside and among the new seed, the power and cunning of the enemy, the patience of the householder till the harvest, on account of which in the long intervening period the evil also can and must grow and ripen, the great proceeding from the small, the secret nature of the transforming power, the seeking and finding on the part of the man, the long mixture previous to the speedy separation at last, the beginning and end, not merely of the Church of Christ, but the end of the world, in which what was not there from the beginning is judged—are not these purely *mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven? And does not Christ declare them by figures in which God, from the creation onwards, has spoken them to our ears, in a way as loud as it is secret.

To you it is *given* to *know*, to understand them, inasmuch as you understand my parables. Therefore truly *given* from above,

[1] This more at large in my seventy selected Psalms, i. p. 104, and following.

revealed (chap. xi. 25; 16, 17)—but why only to *you*? Because you bring to these mysteries open ears and enquiring hearts. *To them* it is not given, and never can be given, because this is wanting in them. Luke, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς; Mark has the most striking expression, which we willingly take from him as having been spoken by Christ—τοῖς ἔξω. Who are *those without*? (This recurs again in passages such as 1 Cor. v. 12, and more and more sharply defined on to Rev. xxii. 15.) First of all, in reference to the company whom Christ was addressing, they are opposed to the οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν who were remaining round about him in the ship, or near to him addressing questions to him; those, therefore, who now went away because they in the meantime had heard enough, or properly speaking nothing,—"hearers by chance and by the by," who hear and yet will not hear. To such people, *everything* comes the same as in parables (see Mark), for even the direct word is still more dark to them. But not because God keeps back anything which he will not give, as is distinctly shown in what immediately follows.

Ver. 12. A weighty word, as regards which all interpretation is vain, unless the spirit reveal it to those who are taught by practice and experience. It is the great key to all the ways of God with fallen man, it is the theodicy of his holy love and righteousness as it will show itself in the end when all shall be revealed! God's free and abundant *giving*—but man's *having* as a condition thereof; God's righteous *taking*—but man's *not having* as the reason of this—these are two weighty secrets between God and man. The entire seeming contradiction in the letter, that to him who has shall be given, from him that has not shall be taken away, urges us to a deeper investigation and explanation of the saying. The full development we shall leave to chap. xxv., where Christ himself explains it by a complete parable; so much we would here observe preliminarily, namely, that the having indicates a receptivity, a faithfulness which receives and keeps. He who has, although he has not from his own strength,—for all that can be had, nay each one himself who can have, comes from God, yet in contradistinction to him who has not, he has from a cause and determination within himself; as the whole of the first parable respecting the ground proves. He who *will have* and thereby can receive, has so far already that which is to be re-

ceived, for he has the open hand for the gift which is then certainly imparted, the ear for the word, the heart for the healing grace. Further, he who *holds fast*, keeps and *uses* (for only by use can it be kept), for him the gift will increase until he shall have abundantly. There is here no standing still on either side. He who *has not*, who neither will receive and take at the beginning nor use to the end, from him will be taken away *that which he has*. This still sharper contradiction decidedly implies that ὃ ἔχει is to be taken ironically.[1] First of all, as Luke, ver. 18 has it: ὃ δοκεῖ ἔχειν—for every ἔχων who does not keep (κατέχει) is only a δοκῶν ἔχειν in a manifold sense. It is an imaginary having, the nothingness of which is to be made manifest by a so-called taking, which yet properly indeed takes nothing from him. It is an earlier having which has become loss through his unfaithfulness, 2 John viii. Other references of this comprehensive saying are not excluded which at last reach even to the entire judicial stripping of the unfaithful one, so that he is left naked and bare even of all that God's long-suffering had still left to him as a portion in the meanwhile.

Ver. 13. Therefore speak I to them *in parables*: this direct answer to the question of the disciples has hitherto, it is to be regretted, received very generally a one-sided explanation from the *following* ὅτι, although it must first of all be understood as an evident consequence from the *foregoing* ὅτι, together with all that follows. How has this truth, as earnest as it is friendly, been obscured by the one-sided explanation which has been given to it, as if Christ here speaks to them in parables, *in order that* they may not understand! Only read what the very unjustly slighted Mark, ver. 33, says truly by the Holy Ghost: He spake the word to them *as they were able to hear it*. (Comp. John viii. 43). Does that mean "not understand?" Christ does not merely say in what follows, as will soon appear: "Therefore speak I to them in parables, *because* they do not understand,"—nor has he in ver. 12 said: "Therefore, *that they may not* understand."

[1] Luther's saying commonly adduced here is well-known: "Where the word of God is understood, there it multiplies itself and betters the man; but where it is not understood there it grows less and hurts the man." We think this, however, not exhaustive enough, inasmuch as it does not depend merely on the *understanding*.

Either of these as separated from the other is "in no sense a justifiable idea,"—the latter still less so than the former. The truth takes both together, as Christ's word here stands between what precedes and what follows. Does Christ then speak purposely to the wind? Are not parables given to be heard, and if they may yet possibly be rightly heard to be understood? Christ does not light his lamp in vain, as he assures us in Mark ver. 21, 23. To what purpose is it then that he lets it shine until the night comes when none can see to work, and that He so patiently and diligently instructs this people also even to the last?

A parable, as has often been truly said,[1] has for the hearer, according to his state and the relation in which he stands to it, two sides; it is *concealing and revealing at the sametime.* But even its concealing works towards a revealing; inasmuch as it draws after it the truth which is signified, urges it only the more strongly, and precisely "because it is not understood, acts as a spur and provocative to further reflection." Whoever then will no longer be moved by it to ask, seek, find, and understand, in him, and *only* in him, it proves its *depriving*, judging power, for in the case of such their own guilt becomes now fully manifest, that they *would* not hear although they *could.* In this way is Mark iv. 33, to be understood, and thus does the parabolic address come with a final sifting efficacy among the multitude, to awaken and save every one who is yet capable of hearing and willing to hear, but to leave, or rather entirely to deliver over to righteous punishment, the wilfully deaf.

In parables (or proverbs, ἐν παροιμίαις, John xvi. 26, 29, which is almost the same, comp. Ez. xx. 49), *i.e.* as much as to say in a manner *unintelligible*, and indeed, where it is not fables like those of Aesop which speak of natural things concerning beasts and men, but eternal wisdom that forms its נִפְלָאוֹת, and therein expresses the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven—the secrets of its eternal counsel from the beginning—the *understanding* of their meaning is a thing not so hastily or easily to be spoken of. Still, (and this is the other side), the eter-

[1] For example, already Bacon (de augm. scient. ii. 13). Est autem usus ambigui atque ad contraria adhibetur. Facit enim ad involucrum, facit etiam ad illustrationem.

nal wisdom of love speaks in this way more intelligibly, more loudly, more openly of its secrets, than ever an Aesop of the west, or a proverb-maker of the east, was able to do. "The profoundest wisdom of nature, the world, and man (more correctly, the revealing wisdom of God himself) is connected with the simplest, nearest, most memorable figure. For the stubborn and the frivolous, this is still the only language which in a happy moment can soften and awaken them. After they have once heard it as a parable, the figure sticks to them, the mirror is ever turned towards them, and they cannot but look into it at some time or other" (Häfeli). "If Christ would not speak to the wind, He must needs break up the truth into parts—separate it into such instances so harsh to our ear and moral feeling, in which abstraction must make use of all its hermeneutical magic power to drive it back from the *nearness* where it causes us so much uneasiness, to the remote wilderness, amid the mist-light of generality" (Kleuker). That which experience proves[1] in our day among the ὄχλοις of the Church, cannot have been otherwise in the time of Christ; thus to understand the conduct and words of Christ, cannot be characterised as the arbitrary interpretation of a commentator. *Therefore*, speak I to them in parables; that to every one who still has anything, may yet be given; and then that from him who has not, may be taken away. To which *second* idea Christ *now* carries out his answer.

Vers. 13—15. After having first given a direct declaration concerning the present obduracy of the people (which, however, is also to be found in the Prophets: Jer. v. 21; Ez. xii. 2,—in the latter passage, it is expressly said immediately before, כִּי בֵּית מְרִי הֵם), Christ quotes at large the prophecy of Isaiah, the same with which John (chap. xii.) must needs close his account of the public testimony and labours of Christ; and Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, his account of the apostolic testimony to Israel—the same as we find in the Epistle to the Romans still abiding upon them, as it was already announced at the first in Deut. xxix. 4. Ἀναπληροῦται at all events intensifies the signi-

[1] Although many preachers practise as much as in them lies the putting back of the near truth into the mist of generality, here meant by Kleuker.

fication of the simple verb; although it is not precisely (as generally in Greek) *again*, or once more fulfilled, it yet means *entirely* fulfilled, now attains its entire truth; that which was already meant in the *prophecy* as such, is now first fulfilled, although it had also its fulfilment at that time in the contemporaries of the prophet. (Comp. this emphatic use of the word in 1 Thess. ii. 16).

The first six chapters of Isaiah form an introductory groundwork to the whole book, consisting of three parts: Chap. i., in immediate connexion with the time present, begins with the Prophet's contemporaries, who were to be chastised, as it were to show the foundation upon which the entire structure of the discourses that point to the distant future is raised. Chap. ii.—v. brings forward, by way of contrast, Israel's calling and destiny, which stands in the remotest prospect, in order again to come down from this elevation to rebuke the people now fallen away of themselves (chap. ii. 5), and to show the grace which is for the righteous; here, as it were, the two extreme points are laid down between which the prophecy is to move. Here already the future Messiah announces himself by the significant name, which entirely corresponds to the circle of ideas used by Christ in the parables: צֶמַח, *sprout*, shoot of a preserved and renewed planting of the Lord, from which at last is to proceed a glorious *fruit of the earth* (chap. iv. 2).—Israel is represented in a *parable* as at present *the unfruitful vineyard* of the Lord. In chap. vi., finally, there is added the sending and instruction of the Prophet, who, in his own time, finds no hearing, but who is still to prophesy for the future, because under the general corruption *a holy seed* (ver. 13) remains hid and preserved. In the original text, we find nothing but imperatives addressed to the Prophet, as before to the people. Whilst he threateningly announces to them: "hear ye, and understand not!" he is himself to harden their heart, to blunt their ears, to close up their eyes. How such language, which retains its truth, is to be rightly understood, the whole Scripture shews us: the imperative is the sharpest form of the threatening future, the prophecy calls forth into manifestation the existing obdurateness, which is to develop itself through their own guilt in regard to the word. Thou shalt speak to them in vain, preach them entirely deaf, at the same time already equivalent to: thou shalt predict their obduracy, according to the form of

expression occurring, for example, at Jer. i. 10. Let it not be overlooked, that these deaf and blind ones are the same to whom healing and salvation is afterwards announced (chap. xxix. 9—12, 18—19, xxxv. 5, xlii. 7), to which, indeed, Christ himself referred in Matt. xi. 5. Christ is, therefore, truly come *to heal them*, as Isaiah also, in his time, spoke from the grace of God in a sincere yet friendly manner to the people. But that which was then manifest, receives now a more complete fulfilment; the gospel of Christ, too, proves at first to them only an occasion of greater hardening (John ix. 39), and the true salvation also of Israel according to the flesh which is there promised, is thereby put back to the distant times of a second future. All this is in Isaiah, as a whole, partly typified in the Prophet himself, partly predicted for the future of Christ; therefore, in Matth. xv. 7—9, a similar word is taken from the same connexion (Is. xxix. 9—13).

Already the Sept., with which the citation here literally corresponds (as also the Chald., at least at the beginning), has rendered the Imperative by a more intelligible Future; and Kimchi expressly observes that the Imperative is in that passage put for the Future. Observe, now, how it corresponds to itself: not *comprehend* or understand, although they hear, not *apprehend*, discern, or see into, although they see. Observe the further order and progress of the expression, which very significantly goes out first from the *heart* to the ears and eyes, in order to return again through the eyes and ears to the heart.[1] For according to the state of the heart, the ear hears; and just as one has heard, so he sees; an intelligent insight results from an intelligent hearing of the word. The way back must now be the same, namely, that the preaching which, by means of parables, is set with special distinctness before the *eyes*, again awakes the hearing ear; and

[1] Ἐπαχύνθη, the Hebr. הַשְׁמֵן, which indicates a hardening of the heart, specially induced by the fat of prosperity and pride (Deut. xxxii. 15). Βαρέως ἤκουσαν, Hebr. הִכְבִּיד, as also βαρήκοος, *surdaster* occurs. Ἐκάμμυσαν, Hebr. properly הָשַׁע, of the smearing of the eyes, here including both sleepiness and short-sightedness, our *blinking*. Expressions, therefore, all of which indicate a *not yet entire* deadness in the power of the sense.

thus the access to the heart is opened up for the right understanding of it. But the *heart* is and remains the decisive thing, all is properly only one sense of the heart; they *perceive not with the heart*, they are not converted that they might be saved! The ἰάσωμαι of the Sept. corresponds exactly to the Heb. וְרָפָא לוֹ, of which we find in Mark the true interpretation: *and their sins should be forgiven them* (as the Chald. וְיִשְׁתְּבֵק לְהוֹן, Kimchi רְפוּאַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ תִּהְיֶה הַסְּלִיחָה). This fearful consequence introduced by the μήποτε has certainly (to speak with Pfenninger), a half-ironical force; "they feared evil, when they heard that I would save them!" But on this very account the ground of such a μήποτε is taken away from Christ, who still ever *speaks* to the deaf, and is laid in their not hearing, in their not perceiving, in their hearts, which will not be converted. Nothing is clearer than this, and the true light is thus thrown on the ἵνα which has been obscured by the predestinarians (and which Mark ver. 12, and Luke ver. 10, put by contraction for the ὅτι in Matt. ver. 11). Philological controversy, which would make it a mere ἐκβατικὸν, is of no avail, and certainly does not quite meet the true sense; for it is by all means the *purpose* of God, that in his grace the fruitlessness of which he knew beforehand, man's guilt and destruction should manifest and develop itself; this remains the *judicial* element in that blindness which, otherwise in the word of truth where are no empty phrases, could never be traced back to God. Once more the sum is this: Christ preaches here to the last as the Apostles in like manner did, in all patience and long-suffering, above all in *order that* whoever has ears may yet hear, ver. 9. But, because the ears which they have they yet have not, or do not use, as he well knew, he speaks with the second and secondary purpose, that their not knowing may be judged as a not willing.

Vers. 16, 17. Christ here turns a look of consolation upon his dear disciples, as before at chap. xi. 25, hence at a later period, according to Luke x. 21—24, Christ, connecting together both addresses, repeats them. It remains true that Christ makes the hearing ear and the seeing eye (Prov. xx. 12), therefore it is *given* to the disciples. But only because they *have*, as was also said before. All the prophets too longed for the coming of Christ, of whom they

testified (1 Pet. i. 10—12); nay, even those who, in past times, were righteous by faith, whose believing expectation and hope pointed to Him who was now come. (John viii. 56; Heb. xi. 13, xvi. 39.) In the simplest parable from the mouth of Christ there is more than in all the former words of God, which the prophets themselves could declare, for it is immediately added: *Hear* ye now the parable of the sower! Hear *ye* who have inquiring hearts, hear it aright—with repeated emphasis on this word "hear," whose decisive significance between God and man pervades the whole of the first parable, as also the whole discourse concerning parables.

Mark vers. 21—25, and Luke vers. 16—18, give the additional information that Christ, further, after explaining the first parable to the disciples, said again what he had already said in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew v. 15, (with which then both evangelists connect the foregoing proverbial saying in Matthew v. 12). Chiefly the first saying concerning the light seems, as was very natural, to have been often repeated by Christ, as in Luke xi. 33 we found it addressed to the people *shortly before*, just as now to the disciples. As the sower sows the seed that it may shoot forth, so the light *comes* into the world, as a lamp is brought into a room (such an analogy lies certainly in the word ἔρχεται in Mark), that it may give light; where it seems to hide and obscure itself, this certainly is not proper to it. At the same time, the words are still more closely applicable to the listening disciples: Think not that the *mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven, of which I spoke, are committed to you to be kept secret; you twelve know and should remember that I send you to speak in the light that which you now receive secretly, to preach afterwards on the housetops what you now hear in the ear! (Matt. x. 26, 27). Observe how significant, precisely here, is this referring of the disciples back to the first word which was declared before all the people to be the kindled light, and how, afterwards at the first sending out of the disciples, the word which foretells the growing publicity of their preaching again recurs to this. (Matt. x. 26). This prediction finds its fulfilment also with special reference to the parables, in so far as they become ever more clear as the history of the world and the church progresses.

When in Mark and Luke we find, further, the charge ad-

dressed to the disciples, *Take heed what* (or *how*) *ye hear*—this is only to be taken as another application of the general call: He who has ears to hear let him hear! But it is sharpened in its form, with special reference to the disciples who have eyes and ears; their *seeing* is to be a more careful looking to themselves also *after* hearing, while the people have not even the first seeing *in order to* hearing. Finally, *Mark ver.* 24 is, in like manner, a repetition in another form of what is said in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. vii. 2, and serves thus to the full understanding of ver. 25.. . (From which it necessarily follows that προστεθήσεται can only be equivalent to δοθήσεται, μετρηθήσεται, and is by no means to be understood with many (as Alford): more will be expected of you hearers of the mysteries of God, greater demands will be made of you.) For the rest, it is equally impossible and unnecessary for us to show how the manifold interpretations of a like kind stand related to the *ipsissima verba* of Christ; we remain satisfied in so far as there is no contradiction on the supposition of a substantially correct account, and not allowing ourselves to be misled by discrepancies that may be pointed out, we perceive throughout the same spirit and sense in the fluctuating letter. That is the only true result to which we must return, after all our criticism and learning,—at one with the reading and hearing church of the faithful. If any one can make out something better without injury to the faith which keeps fast hold of the word, without disturbing the simplicity which understands it—I have at least not found such in the libraries and book markets.

THE SEED IN THE DIFFERENT SORTS OF GROUND.

(Matt. xiii. 3—9, 18—23; Mark iv. 3—9, 13—20; Luke viii. 5—8, 11—15).

The parables of Christ can never be characterised as "loose and jejune," and their figures are never "obscure." (Evang. K. Z. 1833 Nr. 14). Each single parable cannot, indeed, say everything, but must be supplemented by others; this, however, is even less true of the parabolic than of the proper form of address, because the picture-words of God in the creation and the relations

of man's history, are more copiously expressive than the logically-dividing words which result from human thinking. It belongs to us humbly to follow the divine truth imprinted on the figure, and rather, by due reflection, to let the particulars evolve themselves than by a too hasty interpretation to go beyond them. It is to be regretted that the most of preachers treat this parable of the sower in particular in such a manner, that only the general principal truth respecting the good and bad ground remains, while the three kinds of bad ground are not clearly distinguished from each other. We will endeavour to avoid such confusion as shortly and clearly as possible.

In the midst of, and after the intensest zeal in indefatigably speaking the word of God, which only a few hear and keep, Christ here, as it were, composes his own soul, so as to take the most quiet and reflective view of the state of the case. This opens to us, at the same time, the furthest view into the first fundamental mystery of the kingdom of heaven: the *co-operation* of divine efficacious grace with the exercise of the human will in faith or unbelief, faithfulness or unfaithfulness, *upon which its effect depends.* As long as fruit grows from seed, even to the last day, and the seed needs a soil in order to its springing and growing, so long must this be the most appropriate figure within the whole sphere of nature for such a coincidence and correspondence, according to which the fruit comes not from the earth without the seed, but only from it, and again the seed cannot prosper and grow without the favour and will of the soil. Hence, in general, such a figure has been used at all times, to represent spiritual labour on the heart of men and its effect.

Christ, however, gives us the innermost truth when in the explanation (in Luke) he begins by saying: *The seed is the word of God, i.e.*, also conversely: The word of God is *a seed.* The word of man also sows itself in many ways in the hearts of men, so that the wonderful power and efficacy of the *word* is thereby made manifest; that, however, which comes to man and works in him, in the most wonderful and independent manner, is *the word* in the highest sense (Mark v. 14), which the heavenly sower sows, the word of *God.* Once only at the first creation did the earth bear grass, herbs, and trees, which had their seed in themselves, spontaneously without previous sowing, for then the

creative word was itself the seed; since then, however, nothing grows unless seed be first put into the earth. Thus does the word of God which now is not in man, nor proceeds from him, come to him from without, and from above, as, by another application of the figure, the fructifying rain and snow from heaven (Isa. lv. 10, 11). Here, indeed, the written word is not excluded, yet it is the *preached* word that is principally meant, the written word only in so far as it is preached, or preaches and sows itself. In the word which proceeds from the mouth of God, although communicated through the mouth of man (ῥῆμα θεοῦ, Rom. x. 7), is a *power of God* (Rom. i. 16), a living, generative, and forming principle, as in every seed-corn, which therefore (to speak with Luther) no one can thoroughly sift, which bids defiance to all the learned. The word of God is also called a meat, which, however, gives life anew, and does not merely sustain and nourish what is already there, which does not assimilate itself to the form and condition of man, but rather transmutes him into its own new form, as the wonderful principle of the seed transforms the soil and its sap into the plant according to the kind of seed. It is the incorruptible seed of regeneration (1 Pet. i. 23), as ἔμφυτος λόγος (James i. 21). Even the smallest word and saying which comes to us from the *word of God* in the widest sense (Rom. x. 18, in the sense of Ps. xix), preached in all the world, nay, even speaking silently and yet loudly in all nature,—is such a living, powerful *seed.* Christ, however, although not excluding this, yet here means and names principally the finished revelation and sum of all the divine word to man, *the word of the kingdom* (Matth. ver. 19) which He sows and preaches, first of all in His own person, and then by His messengers and sowers.

Now, some have thought, that in the sower there is an intended contrast between the ordinary truth of the figure and the application of it here made, inasmuch as the sower here is a quite uncommon one: for he scatters his seed wastefully everywhere around, even in those places where nothing can grow, conduct which would be foolish in any other husbandman. This, however, is not right, and is an unprofitable refinement of criticism, going beyond the limits of the figure, which is quite simple and complete in itself. The parable speaks of the sower (Matth.

ver. 18, comp. ver. 3, ὁ σπείρων), who just acts according to his office and work: *he goes forth to sow, he sows the word.* (Mark ver. 14.) Thus did Christ pass through the whole land with His preaching, thus will He have His gospel preached to every creature, thus are the servants of the word to leave nothing unsown, even no way, and no stone, for the field of God is by right the whole world. God will maintain His right to it, gain it again to Himself, or, at least, testify to its being His; He does not even acknowledge the right of any other to the way beside the field, as the diligent husbandman at least tries every year anew to gain the reclaimable footpath on the border or in the middle of his field; he knows well the stony ground, but he works it also before and with the seed (as we shall afterwards see); He will, at all events, sow everywhere for *a testimony* that He does not let the land want, that to Him properly it belongs. The first great fundamental idea of the parable then is: God on His part sows diligently, always, and everywhere, *all* must at least *hear* the word, though it should be, in the case of many, against their will and without effect! And where fruit is not brought forth, the fault lies with the ground; it was sown also just that this might be evident.

Christ here comprises in three principal classes really all, one might almost say, the thousandfold kinds and mixtures of the soil that yield no fruit unto the harvest, which are therefore all the more carefully to be distinguished from each other. But here, it is to be regretted, the mass of preachers fall into much confusion, or, when they aim at strictly distinguishing, into many mistakes. When we look at the words, there *appears* at first sight to be a gradual ascent from the worst to the less bad, so that the truly good ground is at last connected with that which is least bad: first, there is no reception of the seed at all, then a shallow reception and a short growth, then there is even a complete taking root and a larger growth, not yet reaching, however, to maturity. Let us look more closely at the particulars, in order to see whether this first understanding of the words approves itself as the only correct one.

Some seed falls παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν (as all the three evangelists agree in saying) *i.e.*, not certainly on the country roads and high ways themselves, but in their neighbourhood; the sense, however,

plainly is, that this margin of the field has been wrongfully made to be part of the way, and *trodden hard* like it, so that the seed only remains lying on the surface, and is given up to destruction. If the field, which its owner and sower, nevertheless, does not yield up, comprehends the whole human world, then the road which lies beyond it, and upon which really no seed is to be cast, would be Satan's kingdom and province, or the sphere of the altogether outward natural life, for which there is no word of God at all, no seed that could spring up in it. And both are true, for viewed in reference to the human hearts lying upon its boundary, or which have already become almost such a way, it is really one and the same thing: Satan has his way and his kingdom in which the spirit has become altogether sensual, sunk into the lower sphere of the creature. Many and various are the things which have power to make the hearts of men so hard, among which, at the present time, "the freight-waggons of *business*" are not to be forgotten. These, then, are such as hear indeed with the outward ear, but no longer *perceive or understand* with the heart; who first of all live entirely *unsusceptible* in the earthly and outward, their heart a thoroughfare for thoughts and devices drawn from a sphere which has nothing in common with the truth and power of life in God's word. The *indifferent* (not merely those sunk in vice and wickedness) whose way is never to feel repentance, or to look at anything in themselves which might awaken such a feeling, who offer to the seed no soft place into which it might penetrate, or where it might be covered. They are so when the seed is scattered, when they are brought into contact with it; more than this Christ will not say here, although we may justly suppose further, how from youth upwards, or at a later period, they may have become so by their own and others' fault. This, in its own time, God will find out and judge, he will certainly act unrighteously to no one, but yet will not overlook the secret beginnings in which the soul thus surrendered itself, and threw itself away upon vanity. Enough, that of the judgment nothing is now said in the parable, but only of the fact: *Grace* works superabundantly. Although there were no susceptible ground, *still* the sower sows the word even upon it, and is such a one truly described as ὁ παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν σπαρείς, *i.e.*, at least *sown upon*,

as it might be translated? No, the expression has a deeper reference, and finds its justification in this, that the man properly so-called, the person himself (as he will or ought to become), is conceived of as the plant already present in the seed as *sown*,[1]—there being here an anticipation of the second parable. Christ speaks even of an ἐσπαρμένον ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ —for where there is a man there also, although it may seem quite otherwise, is still a heart and conscience, a possibility that the seed may penetrate, however hardened he may be, a *beginning* of the new growth wherever seed lies, although it may be ever checked and arrested. That which is heard, although it be not understood, yet lies on the surface, in the memory, and might still penetrate farther were favourable rain to follow the sowing—*if there were not one* who acts contrary to the good sower. It is not a merely human and natural result, then, if the seed cannot at all spring up. *Wherever* such seed lies thus,[2] the *evil one* comes (Mark, Satan; Luke, the devil, so that we can make no mistake as to who is spoken of) the counter-worker of the sower, from *his* kingdom and province, whose evil counsel and will declared against God's counsel of grace, which overlooks no one, is in these terms: *that they believe not, and be saved!* So it is now: where the Creator has worked, the destroyer always follows—still more, where the Restorer begins, the enemy hinders and resists. He is never more busy than in those places where God has just sowed, he always follows (εἶτα Luke) and comes εὐθέως (Mark) wherever he can come, to destroy the good seed. He comes, however, not precisely in his own person, but the devouring *birds* are his power and his host. He is the spirit that rules in the air and fills the atmosphere, in which those live who walk after the course of this world. Christ here, certainly with design, makes use of the birds of *heaven* (as is added in Luke, and perhaps also in Mark) as an emblem of

[1] Alford quite truly: "The seed sown becomes the plant; it is therefore the representative, when sown, to the individuals of whom the discourse refers." Lange expresses it: "The history of his life becomes identical with the history of the seed. The fate of God's seed in the man is the fate of the man himself."

[2] In Matthew it is placed before by anacolauthon: παντὸς ἀκούοντος καὶ μὴ συνιέντος, where such a one is found. In Mark ver. 15 ὅπου is to be construed with what follows, so that the same sense arises.

the manifold means and instruments, all of which serve the evil one in order to the taking away of the word. The little animals appear harmless, and yet, as regards the excellent, truly heavenly seed, they are mere birds of prey (Matth. *ἁρπάζει* equivalent to *αἴρει* Mark and Luke)—the arch-robber, Satan, lets them fly. They are trifles, but many of them together, and they are powerful, so that every bird carries away its little corn. These are the thoughts, talk, and business of the world, that dissipate the mind, and keep it in an atmosphere of frivolity, preventing all entrance of what is heard to the heart; they are not cares and lusts which come from within out of the heart, for this would be to anticipate the third kind of bad ground. Here there is as yet enough in the hindrances which fly past from without, because the soul lives entirely in this outward sphere. In Luke it is also said beforehand that the seed is *trodden down*, which belongs as a thing of course to the designation "on the way-side," so that, on this very account, there follows the assurance that, besides this, destruction comes to the seed *from other quarters*. Christ might perhaps also have said: the wind carries it away, or the like, but He will declare more strongly that the good seed entirely perishes, which could only be expressed by the birds *eating* it up.[1]

Other seed falls on *stony* ground; not precisely hard and naked rock (for Luke *ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν* is to be explained from Matth. and Mark), but on ground which has some earth indeed on the surface, but a rocky bottom farther down, as is not uncommon especially in Palestine. This appears to be a little better than the former, but it, too, is properly no ground for growth, merely for the first springing for a while. Rock slightly covered with earth is always soonest green, but is soon again decayed; the reason is expressed in a threefold form with one and the same meaning: because it has not *deep earth*, therefore, also, not *moisture* enough, consequently also, not *root* (Matth. and Mark, already in the parable give all the three, and then again in the explanation), *i.e.*, only root which does not strike deep enough, therefore as good as none. The *καυματίζεσθαι* of

[1] It is not indeed the living seed of the word of God in itself that is destroyed, but in so far as it is sown in a heart, *as its seed*, as the germ of a new man—as he is here considered.

the heat of the sun is indispensably necessary to all growth, it properly helps growth in what is good; here, however, the effect is a *ξηραίνεσθαι*. These are such as are at first somewhat susceptible, who really receive and understand the word they have heard, but they are shallow and superficial; a little deeper beneath the easily moved, deceptive, false softness of heart, there is the rocky bottom of the hard, proud heart, into which the seed may not penetrate even less than in the trodden way (which is here preliminarily to be carefully observed). In order to the efficacy of the seed of the word, the nourishing *sap* must come from our soil, as the oil for the lighted lamp. True, the sap is again nothing else than the rain and blessing of heaven, which has before been drunk in by the earth, but this cannot penetrate into the rocky ground. The seed-corn, in order to its successful growth, must send forth, as well upwards as downwards, its germ, extending in a twofold direction from the centre point of the generative principle, nay, must even at first and more strongly take root downwards, than grow upwards. Where it only speedily shoots upwards, it has but a diseased growth, and has no firm hold of the earth. But, on account of the identity which we have already found between the seed sown and the person here considered, it is said also, ver. 21 (Mar. ver. 17; Luke ver. 13) that these *people* have no root *in themselves*: the not taking root is precisely their own fault and character. He who *quickly with joy* receives the earnest word of truth which judges the principle of the heart and conscience, perceives not at all its serious meaning and difficulty, expends his strength before the time in shallow feeling, in hasty words, instead of receiving it, as he ought, with the calm earnestness which marks a thorough work slowly effected. Then the sun arises (*ἀνατέλλει* rises higher at mid-day, or in summer, according to the time of the day or year), and this the weak seed, which has shot up in a way not natural, cannot bear. This, too, is a hindrance *from without*, as in the former kind, yet different from the voracious birds which do not belong to the ground. The sunshine and its heat mean no harm to the seed, but come rather as an ordinance from God to promote the growth, and are even necessary to it. (The *ἀνατέλλειν* of the sun corresponds to the *ἀνατέλλειν* of the seed). *Affliction or persecution* (Luke concisely *πειρασμός*)

comes, indeed, also indirectly, through the men of this world, and from the evil one, yet not in entire opposition to God's counsel and will, but *on account of the word*, belongs therefore itself to the word, proceeds from it, and corresponds to it in the natural order and progressive development of the kingdom. Nothing ripens without heat, and, in the case of a good root, it must promote, and not hinder the growth. The general designation of a man of the second class is πρόσκαιρος, which is not to be rendered either by *inconstant* or *changeable* alone, for the word includes both; what subsists and continues only for a fit or convenient time, continues only for a while.[1] Luke's explanation πρὸς καιρὸν πιστεύουσιν is also to be read not merely as 1 Cor. vii. 5, but at the same time as opposed to the inconvenient καιρὸς πειρασμοῦ.

The third kind of ground is certainly neither trodden into a path nor stony, therefore the seed takes deep enough root in it, and its growth continues longer and rises higher, shoots up even into the stalk, and seems to put forth ears. Such a man *hears* the word, and that not merely as those of the first class, but really hears it as those of the fourth class: he hears and understands it—for in all the three evangelists, the antithesis lies properly in the *bringing forth fruit*. But it fails in this, it also does not reach this point: Matth. and Luke ἄκαρπος γίνεται, it becomes at last, shows itself in the final issue to be unfruitful, although a quite different appearance really gave promise of fruit; Luke οὐ τελεσφοροῦσι, they do not bring to the full period, an expression also used of pregnant persons. Satan then with his devouring host does nothing to this man, he has taken the word to heart with true *apprehension* of it. Nor is he, by any means, hurt by the assault of temptations, and opposition, he has root in himself, through a deeper *experience*, which keeps him from falling away *at once*, when he is offended; he has therefore, on the one hand, a good earnest *will* to bring forth fruit, for how otherwise could the seed grow to such an extent in him? What is it then that injures him? Insincerity in everything! The indecision of his not yet settled will! On his ground are the *thorns*, or rather, as they do not grow till afterwards, their

[1] "Dependent on the time, serving the spirit of the time" (as Lange expresses it) does not at all lie directly in the expression.

concealed roots are in it. Here the parable stretches beyond the natural figurative sphere into that of the biblical types, according to which the thistles and thorns of the luxuriant tares, growing spontaneously out of the earth since the first curse (as it were, the serpents and vermin of the ground), represent the state of the natural heart of man, in which sin already dwells and luxuriates, 2 Sam. xxiii. 6; Jer. iv. 3. This *other seed* is already there since man was made evil by the evil one; and when any one only allows this to grow up along with the good seed, Satan does not need to sow it anew, and may for a long time see the good seed growing up along with it, conscious all the while of his victory over it. This is Satan's host *within* the heart, more hostile than the birds mentioned before, so that here the circle of the three kinds of ground, where Satan maintains his right and power, completes itself. What creeps more stealthily, or is more difficult to eradicate and more dangerous, than the fibrous roots of *lusts* sown from the very first in the heart of man? They *go in* (as Mark has it) between the wheat, *i.e.*, they grow up amongst it (ver. 7, *ἀνέβησαν*), and *choke* the word, notwithstanding of the prosperous increase it has already made. These lusts are denoted by Matth. in a twofold form, as the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches: which may certainly, first of all, be understood of the poor and the rich, although, on farther consideration, it will appear, that the "*desire* to become rich" deceives also the poor, as in like manner riches carry with them their own *cares*. Luke adds to these the *ἡδονάς*, in general, and finally Mark *αἱ περὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἐπιθυμίαι*, in order that we may not understand riches or poverty alone, in the literal sense.[1] *Πλοῦτος* is in general equivalent to property, possession, enjoyment, anything whatever that belongs to *the world*, and everywhere excites *care* as well as *pleasure*. *Τοῦ βίου*, equivalent to *τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, belongs probably to all the three ideas. The *ἡδοναί* are at the same time mere *ἀπάται* and *vice versa;* nay even the *μέριμνα* is the same *desire* towards what is earthly, represented and disguised as care. *Ἀπάτη* and *τέρψις* are related also in the Greek writers. All this, however, in itself comes neither from riches

[1] Not precisely: desires after what remains (other things) *i.e.*, after this and that (after all sorts of things), but it means: and whatever else is of this kind.

nor from poverty, neither from a superfluity of the good things of this life, nor from want, pain or hunger, but only develops itself through such πειρασμός, and is already in the heart and grows *out* of it. Now, those who allow it to grow up *with* the seed of the word, so as at length to destroy it, are the insincere and half-hearted, who do not press on to conquest and decision for what is good, but *go so undecidedly* to work, that for a while, no one knows what will come out of them, whether or not they will yield ripe fruit and a harvest—but at last the want discovers itself!

We are now prepared, after the examination of the three classes, to look more narrowly at their order and connexion, so as to get beyond the common interpretation. The *hindrances* to the springing, growing, and ripening *follow each other* according to the time of this threefold development of the seed. The first are people whom the word does not awaken, because already its reception, the springing of the seed, has been hindered; the others are "awakened" people who, however, come to nothing because they have not steadiness and root for growth; the third are even converted people, whose sanctification does not come to maturity but goes back again. In like manner it might be said, that the first hindrance, viewed generally and as a whole, threatens the period of childhood, which lives for the outer world, and is yet unsusceptible of the higher truth; the second, the period of youth, which is as susceptible as it is inconstant; the third, a still farther advanced age, when the ripening in sanctification depends on the rooting out of indwelling sin. Already, we see, that Christ in his representation goes out indeed from principal classes distinguished from each other by the reception which is given to the word coming or already come to them; by no means, however, in the deeper sense can he mean, that these three classes exclude each other. We must rather say, further, that *the three classes include each other*, so that he who has found himself in the one must soon also find himself in the others, whether he begin with the first of these or with the last. The three figures taken together, supplement each other, and correspond properly to the whole man, in so far as understanding, feeling, and will receive the word: the first do not *understand* it, although they have heard it and think that they have understood it as any other word, so that it is still present in their memory; the

second *feel* its power not truly inwardly, although they seem to have been exceedingly "affected" by it; with the last there is awanting the pure subjected *will*, notwithstanding of their knowledge and experience.[1] Do we not see, then, that the gradual rise to *something better* is merely apparent, and that the corruption and the resistance of the human heart rather only discovers itself in such progress, in an *ever more aggravated form?* It is altogether superficial to take the first class in the sharpest sense as representing the *hardened*, of whom the discourse cannot be, inasmuch as the trodden way is not yet a rock. By all means (and this is what has led to that mistake), the first class corresponds here, first of all to the blind and deaf, who are described in Matth. ver. 13, 15 according to Is. vi.; but this unsusceptibility is very different from that which dogmatic phraseology, and the Scripture also in other places, means by "hardness" in the proper sense. It is a threatening picture for them, still it by no means represents an irremediable state; otherwise Christ would not here seek by parables to open their ears to hear. The first kind of ground represents to us the outward appearance and state of things with the *majority* in all times; this first figure, taken as it were, from the surface further develops itself, however, to the second and third which were already implied in it. The hardness of the human heart is not merely the result of being outwardly trodden upon, it shews itself in a more advanced stage as the internal rocky ground,[2]—and hast thou found that it has gone so far with thee, then will a true self-knowledge soon discover to thee also the crop of thorns. He who has become a way on which the devil's hosts have free scope, is himself to blame for this, although the first treading down of this way was the work of the devil; it is the devil, in like manner, who has made the land rocky within, and

[1] One might at the same time say not without a certain truth: The first are, in reference to the word, the phlegmatic, the second the sanguine, the third the choleric and melancholic together. Strangely playing upon the passage, so that the most wonderful consequences may proceed from it, Lange even views it in reference to the four religions of the world; Heathenism, Judaism, Mahommedanism, Christianity. Would that Christendom were the good ground! Missionaries find even Heathenism more susceptible.

[2] As the rock of the sensual, natural man, reaching almost to the surface, as Braune says.

has also sown his thorns in it, although, as regards both, it is again the fault of the man *if they continue and do not give place to the word.* The three figures are distinct from each other, in so far as they may be understood to represent the *leading* character *as manifested* of different men, stages of life, churches, even nations, and yet they are so far fundamentally one, as there is no single individual who must not in some way or other find himself in all the three. Finally, as there is a *progress* in the manifestation of corruption from the first to the third, so there is also a retrograde movement from the third to the first. If thou lettest the tares grow, will it not soon come to this, that every word which thou hearest anew shall only so superficially impress thee as it does the stony ground hearers? And being thus inconstant, art thou not become again a trodden way? Or rather, is it not *worse* to receive the word with joy and yet not with earnestness, so as to let it take root, than not to apprehend it at first? Is not the guilt of the third the greatest, and liable to the severest judgment?

What now *the good ground* is, upon which, when God sows at large, always *some* seed falls, and which, as we are here told beforehand, does not fail—we may easily and rightly understand from the threefold antithesis to the bad which is given in the expressions themselves, Mark, ver. 8: ἐδίδου καρπόν (ver. 7 καρπὸν οὐκ ἔδωκε), and this it does ἀναβαίνοντα (while in the first ground, not even a green crop *sprung up* as the first καρπὸς of the seed), καὶ αὐξάνοντα (while this αὐξάνειν was wanting at least in the second). In general, the good ground is first of all *soft* or loose on the surface, then, it is also *deep* or soft below, finally, it is *pure*, free from the seed of tares. The pure and good heart, then, is *susceptible* for receiving, *solid* for keeping, *sincere* or decided, self-denying, earnestly persevering in letting the divine seed work within it by that power which ever tends towards fruit. Which triad we find again expressed in Luke ver. 15, in the ἀκούειν, κατέχειν, and ὑπομονή. The first condition is the right *hearing*, that it be really heard, and is denoted by different words, in Matth. συνιέναι, Mark παραδέχεσθαι, Luke πιστεύειν. For, truly to hear the word as God's word, and to *believe* it, is certainly in the first stage one and the same, and is found wherever the heart is soft for such hearing. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 26, 27,

דֶּרֶךְ לְבָבְךָ). But, as between hearing and hearing, so at a farther stage between believing and believing, there is still a difference. Luke, (ver. 13) places, in opposition to the μὴ πιστεύσαντες ver. 12, a real πιστεύουσι of the second kind, but the πιστεύειν must perfect itself in the ὑπομονή (which is again placed in opposition to the ἀφίστανται).—Let us inquire, now that we are come to the true point: How can a human heart be pure from the bad seed of lusts, and, if it must be so at first, in order to afford good ground for the seed of God, *i.e.*, if it must be already purified, to what purpose, then, is this seed of regeneration?—thus shall we find, at the conclusion of the parable, the key to all the questions which it suggests preliminarily as a proposed *enigma*. As the new wine requires new bottles, and finds indeed only old ones, which itself makes new, even so it is with the good heart for the good seed. That newness of the bottles consists precisely in this, that they are made open to receive what is new, the καρδία καλὴ καὶ ἀγαθὴ needs only from first to last to be a true, honest, upright heart, *then will the seed be efficacious!* There, indeed, where choking thorns come in the way, the similitude from nature is no longer applicable to the mystery of the kingdom of heaven; as a parable it has already reached its limits, where the truth goes beyond the similitude. There is a *miraculous seed* superior indeed to all natural seeds, so powerful that by its growth it can and will choke all thorns. Nay more, it can also break through the rock in striking its root down into the earth, and can make that to be again a field of God which was a way of the prince of this world. This is already the effect of the seed, and it is prepared and accompanied by the rain and the plough. He, then, who humbly and submissively yields himself up to the heavenly sower, with all his sowing, helping, furthering, efficacy, *becomes* good ground, and brings forth his fruit. And, according to the condition or capacity of the soil, as also according to the faithfulness of the working (his own or another's) he brings forth fruit an *hundred-fold* (which according to Gen. xxvi. 12, is the entire blessing of God), *sixty-fold*, or *thirty-fold*. Again three steps also in the degree of fruitfulness;[1] which means, how-

[1] Only not as Roos who for once deviates into foreign ideas, and is for interpreting thus: Thirty corns from one corn—this takes place when

ever, that the same measure is not required of every one, that it would rather be a mischievous temerity to attempt to increase gain beyond the given talent. Mark reverses the steps in the degree of fruitfulness, while Luke, by mentioning the hundred-fold alone, will teach us, according to the meaning of the spirit in such a change of words, that wherever ground brings forth as much fruit as it can, it is reckoned an hundred-fold.

Where now is, and whence comes, the good ground? In this first parable it is only declared, in accordance with present experience, that when the entire word of God, the word of the kingdom, comes to men, it is found side by side with the bad; but precisely therewith it suggests the questions which the second parable answers. Will Christ then say, that there are from the first good and bad human hearts? The answer is found in Matth. vii. 11, Mark vii. 21, 22. Where is the rich man whom riches have not more or less deceived, or the poor man whom riches have not allured? Where is a poor man without cares of this life, or a rich man without care and heart-disquiet arising from his possessions? Where, in fine, is a human heart without lusts in it? Nowhere, then, is the good ground natural. The natural, carnal man *receives not* that which is of the Spirit of God. (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Consequently, even the second and third kind is no longer this natural man as he is, but as grace has already worked and softened him, and has more or less even prepared an entrance for the seed. In the prophet we read (Isa xxviii. 24): Doth a plowman plow, or break, or harrow his land always for the sowing—without going on *to sow?* The same holds conversely: Does he sow at once, or only, without first ploughing and then harrowing the land? The good land is of God's preparing; His rain softens what is hard trodden, His miraculous plough breaks in pieces the rocks, His plants spring up, choke even the thorns; His heats of affliction promote growth, rather than burn up. Before the gospel of the kingdom, there went forth the law and the preaching of repentance; along with, and *before*, every true word, his secret, precursive grace works, in order to prepare the τεταγμένους (Acts xiii. 48) for

one faithful soul communicates the word which it believes, and by which it is saved, to *thirty others*, so that they also shall be saved!

the preached word. Here the grounds that determine the issue lie much farther back, and more concealed, and only come first into manifestation in the conflict of the preached word with the heart.

But, again, in all this there is no *gratia irresistibilis*, no *decretum absolutum*. The man obeys or resists this divine working, under which the progress to what is better or worse is then developed and confirmed. And, even to the last, must the sowing and working of man, spoken of in Gal. vi. 7; Jer. iv. 3; Hos. x. 12, correspond to the sowing of the word on the part of God, in order that what is sown may grow to fruit; thus it goes on even to the harvest, according to the principle laid down in Matth. xiii. 12. Heb. vi. 7, 8 describes the *third* kind of bad land in complete antithesis to the first; it is by no means the first.

Thus our parable teaches not merely the impartial, universal grace of the sower, sowing everywhere openly, with diligence and zeal, but also in that exceeding patience which does not yet give up the bad land, points farther back to the working before and at the sowing. But man is only all the more to blame should this grace continue for him in vain. What is the *fruit* which the great, good, and patient husbandman and sower[1] will have? Not single fruits or words, but a man of God born again by the word, and fitted for every good work. For this reason ὁ σπαρείς, οἱ σπειρόμενοι, σπαρέντες in the explanation given in Matt. and Mark, do not signify merely as is wont to be observed: land *sown upon*, (although in the Greek, σπείρειν ἄρουραν or γῆν, is also said) —but this form already glances over to the following parable, in which the children of the kingdom are themselves entirely the sown and fruitfully grown-up good seed. Precisely as Luke (ver. 14) uses συμπνιγονται, *passively* of men, as at the same time of the fruit.

We hope that this our interpretation in some small measure answers to the word of Christ, which (Mark iv. 13) makes a thorough understanding of this parable to be of high importance: If ye understand not this, how will ye understand all the other parables? It is the enigma to which we consider those that follow as the key. The question, *Whence?* which is immediately

[1] Jam. v. 7 also meant of Him,—ἕως ἂν λάβῃ to be referred to καρπός. Thus does our ὑπομονή also proceed only from His.

suggested chiefly by the first kind of ground, finds its answer in the second parable. The third parable of the great and high-growing mustard seed corresponds to the second kind of ground, in which the *growth* is wanting; the fourth parable of the leaven stands opposite to the third kind of ground, in which there is the want of a purifying *penetration*. The self-denying, all-surrendering, nature of the good heart appears in the fifth and sixth, and the seventh winds up all with the separating judgment.

WHEAT AND TARES.

(Matth. xiii. 24—30, 37—43.)

The varying application of the figures in the different parables, which we noticed already at the commencement, is fitted, generally speaking, to excite the attention to penetrate beyond the figure to the thing. But the new application which is here in this second parable given to the "seed," signifies something more than this, and has its truth in the internal connexion of these two principal parables which, rightly understood, supplement each other. In the first, we have the *beginning*, how the word, as the seed of regeneration, comes to and into men; in the other, the *progress*, which at the same time first reveals the *internal proper course* of the thing: Men themselves as the birth and fruit proceeding from the word. The new man is, as it were, nothing but the word of God, as Luther or J. Arndt would say. And, indeed as, in the natural figure, the chain which connects fruit and seed ever renews itself, so that the seed itself must be called the fruit in the most proper sense (Is. lv. 10), so are the children of God really sown again as seed on the field of the world. But who sows this good seed? He alone, the new holy *Son of Man*, whose humanity itself is the noble wheat-corn for all this abundant fruit. (John xii. 24; iv. 36). Hence, in the first parable, over which the veil hangs, we may still understand by the sower every one who speaks the word of God, who preaches the gospel of the kingdom; now, on the contrary, it is declared with emphasis that Christ alone, even when he employs others in the work, is the true sower. For he has the good seed, he is himself the good seed.

Ver. 24. *Παρέθηκεν*—laid the parable before them: not precisely as a meal (ver. 52), rather as a certain instruction, as the solution of an enigma, which, indeed, was again itself mysterious (Acts xvii. 3). *Ὡμοιώθη*, although a common expression, yet intimates that the comparison is not made merely by the speaker, but already lies in the figure and the thing. According to the eternal counsel of God, the kingdom of heaven is thus arranged, constituted, predicted in the natural figure. In the dative *ἀνθρώπῳ σπείροντι*, the whole story stands comprised. *To sow good seed*, in the deeper sense, is God's prerogative; men can merely take care of it in order to its growth, they can never procure and give the first seed of what is good. All good has come from God at first in the creation, all renovating good in the evil world comes again from God, but through this Son of Man of Nazareth. Herein lies an answer more than sufficient to that question of Nathaniel. He sows *good*, *i. e.*, at the same time, nothing but good, true, pure, and unmixed seed (see ver. 27, and comp. Lev. xix. 19). On *his* field (purposely *ἐν τῷ*, instead of *εἰς τὸν*), according to the right of possession, and this field is *the world*.[1] Christ could not possibly say anything else *here* than "*the world*," and all preachers and interpreters who, without reason, substitute "*the Church*" for this, lose thereby a highly important ground feature of the parable. For here is already presupposed and comprehended what we read in Matth. xxviii. 19: the great sowing, which was done once indeed as a living groundwork and beginning, was for all nations, in all countries; its effect goes on as a further and further sowing without limits. In no period of the history of the kingdom ought we to understand and explain as his field only that which has been already sown, we ought to build no garden-hedge around the "Church," as if it were confined and enclosed within certain countries.[2] It is true, on the other hand, that it is not the world as the evil world, that is meant, but as the field

[1] Roos thinks that "in this parable, therefore (where it is said, *his* field), the field is now the principal idea of the whole, just as before, the seed (Luke viii. 5, *his* seed)." But this mistaken idea will hardly admit of being carried out.

[2] Roos, therefore, is again very wrong when he says: "In the second parable the kingdom of heaven has already a special field, or a place of its own upon earth."

of the Son of Man which he has sown and will sow, as his present kingdom on the earth (ver. 41), to which the perfected heavenly kingdom of the Father (ver. 43), stands opposed, as the *field* yields up its fruit to the *barn*. That the field is not yet the barn—therein lies the great truth which the Donatists of old did not comprehend, and therefore in their controversy perverted the whole parable. When they laid stress upon this, that Christ says "the world" and does not therefore speak of his Church in the world, they overlooked blindly enough that Christ, in this phrase, at the same time recognises no other enclosed Church-field in this world, *but leaves the boundaries open*, consequently, even the mixture, which exists in the "world" must also be understood of the world *in so far as* it continually becomes, and is, his field.[1]

Ver. 25. On the field stands now the sown wheat, *the children of the kingdom*, here in a different sense from chap. viii. 12. There, they are such as were patiently borne with in the outward appearance and calling, who *had* a claim to the kingdom until their being cast out reveals its want of foundation; here they are such as have a true claim and retain it, they are, what they are called, the good seed. They are such as have been made alive by the word of God, bearing its goodness, its truth, its life in themselves. They are those through whose diffusion and fruitfulness the world is to become, and will become, the *kingdom*. Where any such good seed has fallen, and may yet fall, there the King who sows, prepares and vanquishes for himself slowly and patiently this kingdom. The kingdom vanquished and won as a field by sowing! What a word this for destroying all false conceptions of this kingdom! The tares are the children of the *evil one*, for ver. 39 points back to ver. 19; he who sows them is the devil (their father, John viii. 44, as the children of the kingdom have God for their Father, Matth. ver. 43), consequently, they are his work (1 John iii. 8), the fruit of his sowing. The devil sows error, lies, wickedness, *offence*, and

[1] Hence, on the other hand, Augustine erroneously objected to the Donatists that, *world* stands here for *Church*. This alone by no means settles the matter. Rather, because the tares are not to be cleared away from the world that is *to be sown upon*, they must also remain upon it *after it has been sown* (where we properly expect to find them.)

hindrance against what is good, but this sowing springs up and shows itself in *persons*, who are therefore, themselves also, comprehended under the *offences*, ver. 41.

Here Christ certainly means, as the words first of all intimate, a *second sowing* by the evil one, which again comes amongst the wheat[1] *after* the Son of Man has first sown his good seed in the evil world, after he has sown wheat amongst the devil's first and everywhere present tares. For the devil's first sowing, the tares which the enemy has first scattered in every soul to which the word can be preached, stands already on the field of the world, for whence, otherwise, at the first preaching of the word of the kingdom are those evil hearts which, according to the first parable, it finds! The tares here, in this parable, are then not such as grow besides of themselves on the field of the world, in so far as it is the devil's kingdom, but such as shew themselves anew in the kingdom of Christ. These may properly be denoted as a second sowing, coming between the wheat, for the devil has not merely seduced men at first, but is always seducing the whole world, he delays not to come again, especially wherever God with his word of grace has come (ver. 19). He does not tear out the wheat, for this he has neither the power nor the inclination; not the power, because the strength of the good seed from God at the first resists him; nor the inclination, because his malice and wickedness rather lead him to choke the wheat by a secretly growing influence, and thus to mar God's sowing. It is his greatest pleasure to sow *between the wheat*, nay, (a truth which goes beyond the figure), to put into the wheat the danger and the tendency again to become tares,[2] just as the good sower has torn away his tares from him, and made wheat of them. But—and this is of importance afterwards as regards the answer of the householder—this second sowing is only a continuation, consequence, and manifestation of that first and initial sowing to which it points back, as also he who in the fulness of time sows as the Son of Man, as the concealed Logos and Mediator through whom all renovation is effected, has already sown from the begin-

[1] Observe the probably genuine reading ἐπέσπειρεν. Vulg. superseminavit.

[2] Daub: "The enemy who puts into the wheat the tendency itself to become tares." (Jud. Ischar. ii. 7).

ning his good seed as the preparation for his kingdom then coming into manifestation.

While men slept: Almost all preachers continually interpret this of an offence and neglect on the part of the appointed watchmen (Is. lvi. 10), and cannot omit bringing in here also, against the text, their otherwise well-founded castigatory lectures against their order. It is not, indeed, enough to object to this interpretation, that this sleeping is afterwards not explained, for neither is there any interpretation of what is said by the *servants;* in like manner, taken strictly, it is not enough to say that the ἄνθρωποι in the parable are found altogether apart from the seed, the good and the bad, for the servants are represented in the same way, because the parable does not admit of its being otherwise, although they themselves are also a part of the wheat. But what already is decisive as regards the true meaning of our Lord is this, that it is by no means said: *the servants* slept—these rather show themselves as watching and guarding with all laudable zeal.[1] As indeed, in that period of the church to which the parable chiefly points, the *apostles* certainly did not sleep, but watched and were zealous for the purity of the church.[2] In addition to this, finally, the parallel parable in Mark iv. 27, gives the certain truth, that *men* have day and night, that they *must* sleep and rise again at the proper time; no one in ordinary life (according to which the parable is to be explained) watches his field all night against such wickedness as that here described; consequently, by this feature of the parable nothing else is expressed than *by night* (as Job xxxiii. 15), in darkness and secrecy. This is the way of the evil one in all that he does, just as in the parable the malicious enemy will not sow his tares in day-light lest the faithful servants should immediately surprise him, and counteract the mischief before it was rightly accomplished. Secretly does the enemy put his seed into the Lord's

[1] For, with Roos for example, to speak of other servants who came afterwards as more zealous, but too late, so that now the earlier church discipline no longer prospered, is evidently against the text.

[2] Very wrongly, as also contrary even to the progress of prophetical chronology in the parables as *we* find it, Thiersch (12 Vorlesung) will date the occurrence later, and now accuse the bishops under the Christian empire of the criminal "*sleep.*"

field, reckoning on its springing up at a later period, so that no one observes him but the Lord alone, who indeed knows all; secretly does he *go his way*—in which words the same thing is said—he is contented with his work, and is quite willing to be denied by all who think that there is no devil, or that he has at least done and accomplished nothing more here—until the confusion, alas! discovers itself, and the doubtful "*Whence?*" is no longer to be warded off. Precisely *this* is the signification of that feature in the parable, of which *Neander* thinks that, being introduced merely to fill up the picture, it has *no* signification.

Ver. 26. Seen from a distance and in the infancy of the young vegetation all seems to be wheat on the field; it is also called so, and the small, concealed, but strong beginnings of the hindrance, the mystery of wickedness which Satan has put in, in opposition to the equally deep planted mystery of grace, are overlooked even by apostolic eyes without special illumination. This was the form of the Church at its first commencement. Soon, however, more than *one* Ananias breaks forth in the midst of those who seemed to have one heart and one soul in Christ; more than *one* Simon among those who believed and were baptized. That which the third kind of ground before represented in the case of the individual repeats itself in the mass: when the grain shot higher and brought forth fruit, then were seen the tares now much more rapidly out-growing it. *Τότε ἐφάνη*, then they became manifest, and, by the want of good fruit, or rather by their *bad* fruit, were *known* as a spurious, pernicious after-growth, imitating the form of the wheat. It is not without special reason that Christ has not here again said *ἄκανθαι* in general, but *ζιζάνια*; for although both go together, and tares of every kind are not here excluded, he yet brings into prominence the special reference of the tares to the wheat in their worst species. *Ζιζάνια* signifies what we call darnel, also after-wheat, cockle weed, &c. It is, as Schubert, in his Natural History significantly says, the "only *poisonous* grass," the true counterpart to corn in nature, hard to distinguish from wheat. Christ has certainly both these things in his eye, its resemblance to wheat, and its poisonous noxiousness, and it is not without reason that, in the striking change of name, he here penetrates into the physiology of nature. When, however, in the Talmud, where the

word is זוּנִין (instead of זוּזָנִין) coined etymologically from זנה, actual wheat of a degenerate kind is understood by the expression,[1] this is indeed true in a certain sense, but by no means corresponds to the parable of Christ, in which the genuine is distinguished from the spurious, the fruitful grain from the tares, even from their first origin and seed. He here teaches his servants to distinguish what is not from God but from the evil one, although, with false and hypocritical appearance, it stands in the midst of what is good; he even predicts already that with knowing glance they shall be able to detect it when its time comes.[2] Thus might it be said, at the same time, that the *mixture* in the Church of Christ is not so much anything new, as rather a *separation* of the mixture already acknowledged to exist in the world; for, inasmuch as the servants of the Lord even now see and lament the mixture in the Church, it may be said that the old and new tares of the evil one, because they grow among the wheat, have *become manifest.* When the world becomes the Church-field, then its sin will show itself in a different way from what it did before. So is it, and so will it be, just as there is no field or garden upon earth without tares, which must be weeded out: this Christ assures us of, and predicts, up to this point (in the first part of the parable), only as a fact, as in the entire foregoing parable; now, however, He carries the thing farther to the important question and answer.

Ver. 27, 28. Is not this a *field* and *thy* field? This is the question which these servants address to this Master, well knowing what and how much they are saying, and presenting thus their question in a form all the more enigmatical, and, as far as regards their own thoughts, unanswerable in contrast to the actual state of things. Where wheat grows there is a field, there a previous sowing has taken place, a sowing of good seed: else,

[1] When in the times of the flood the earth committed whoredom, seed was sown and the earth brought forth זוּנִין instead. Hence now the bastard grows among the grain.

[2] If the literature of the *Apocryphal* and *Gnostic* periods (truly the first ζιζάνια) are now again sought for, so as to cause offence and confusion—this is pure wilfulness. Others rightly set before those who are candid precisely this spurious material, in order to a salutary and convincing comparison with the genuine.

whence comes the good fruit? The wheat then makes the *field*, be it much or little, even though ten times as many tares should stand "among the wheat." (Or "upon the field," ver. 36, for this is the same thing). Now the servants farther know so much of their Master, that, in a question which wants and needs no answer, they unconditionally take it for granted that *he* has sown no darnel on his field! They do not imagine, like many, for whom the perplexing whirl of church-history and heresy-history yields no other result in the end but fearful doubt, that all this must have arisen from the seed not having been quite pure at the beginning. So much the more enigmatically—as the darnel has evidently been carefully sown in abundance—does the unavoidable doubt present itself: Whence has this field these tares? As good servants of the good and wise householder, they do not lose confidence in him, they do not immediately leave his service when they find matters so, but come to him with the *question*, as modest as it is urgent, in which they confess their difficulty. This, now, is indeed the proper question of all questions, the ground-question of the philosophy of all times, relating to the origin of evil, the enigma of sin in God's world. It treats of the tares in the world, which appear as an after-wheat even on the place where Christ has sown, and look all the worse on this account; and this second sowing points plainly enough back to a first sowing of tares in the garden of God. When we find already in the earth the positive "tendency to inculture, to wildness," this is to be regarded as a true type of humanity—which, without a first evil in it, would not be so immediately susceptible of that which destroys the good implanted in it. Inasmuch, then, as the servants inquire first of all only after the origin of the evil in the newly-made planting, their question points also back to the other, concerning the origin of evil in general, and in reality includes it. It is as if Christ here put into the mouths of those who heard the foregoing parable—the question: Has God, then, made human hearts having rocky-ground and thistle-seed in them? In this deeper sense of the question, let us mark and feel the strong earnestness and emphasis of the answer to such a question: *An enemy hath done this.*

Thus does the entire Holy Scripture reply to this question, not otherwise, not less and not more. This great answer removes the

origin of evil in the human world, as completely from God, as from man, inasmuch as it names the evil one; but further than this, it answers nothing, and we, too, ought to rest satisfied with this. I have sown no tares! Thus testifies the Creator, from whom nothing evil proceeds, and this is already presupposed by all servants, who honestly ask, even before they receive the answer. He who, in any way, so speculates as to trace back to God the occasion and ordination of sin, be it in phrases ever so cunningly concealed—has against him God's pure and clear word in the Scripure, as also in the conscience; he makes *Christ* a liar, who not merely in his word, but in his whole person and manifestation, in his entire new sowing of the good seed, is the living, actual protestation of God against all fellowship of his holiness with what is evil. So far from the righteous Father having created it, he sets himself directly against it in his Son, and it is his work to judge it and to eradicate it. But, just as little is the first origin of evil to be ascribed to man, and the kingdom of hell is not on the earth (vers. 1, 14). All that is evil in man has its root in a deeper, altogether spiritual, kingdom of evil,—of evil which is completely so, originally and finally—and is only its sowing and issue. He who so speculates as presumptuously to rob the poor man of his single excuse, which in reality has still a ground of truth: "The serpent deceived me"—let him see well whether he is not going against the Scripture, as well as against the inmost testimony of conscience, and rendering the enigma still more inexplicable by making out flesh and blood itself to be Satan.[1] No, the householder, in his answer, adheres to what is right. There is an enemy who is *his* enemy (ver. 25), and of whom with a sublime simplicity, he assures his servants who were not able to comprehend his night work: An enemy has done this! In the parable it is properly ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος, a hostile man, *i.e.*, here, as opposed to Christ, a hostile being,[2] although with

[1] "The doctrine concerning Satan belongs to the revelations which God hath given to man"—aye even to those that are especially kind and comforting. He who denies here, only accuses himself beyond what is due.

[2] In the Roman law there are punishments against such malice on the part of hostile neighbours. Roberts (Orient. illustr.) speaks of Jewish proverbs concerning this; Trench (on the parables), who cites this, mentions a case which occurred in Ireland of a dismissed tenant who acted thus out of revenge.

perfect justice, and with a profound penetration into the sense of the words, Luther taking already into view the interpretation in ver. 39, renders: *The* enemy hath done this! For the householder will thereby tacitly say, at the sametime: Vex not yourselves, I know well what you know not, I know my enemy. It is not to be overlooked, how the σπείρων τὸ καλὸν σπέρμα is followed by the enemy as the ὁ σπείρας τὰ ζιζάνια, who has *sown* the tares, as now, so also from the beginning. This is as much as to say, Who else, then, is the evil one but this beginner and father of all evil? The sin which exists only in the living, personal will, can have no beginning out of the personal will, its origin must be in a *beginner*. There is then "a kingdom of *conscious* wickedness," out of the human,—a point of unity and beginning in a radically evil personality. This, again, is among the things *hid from the foundation of the world*, and this answer is *no* answer. For the householder says nothing further; and if we speculators, less modest than these servants, should begin again to ask, Whence then comes the enemy and the devil? Thou hast surely not created him? How, then, has he become the devil? the householder in the parable is silent, and the whole Scripture and revelation is silent at this limit, as also Moses at the very beginning of it in Gen. i. 1, mentions the brooding darkness, and lets the serpent speak in paradise without a how or whence. The angels may, perhaps, know the when and the outward how, a little more exactly than we children of men could understand it even if anything were written about it; but the internal How? and Whence? of the fall is most probably just as much hid from them as from us. For sin is just that which is absolutely perverted, it is that which has no ground, how, then, could there be another ground out of it from which it might be explained? The Creator alone, before whom there is no mystery, fathoms the abyss, as he does the hearts, of men, (Sir. xlii. 18), hell is naked before him and destruction has no covering—(Job. xxvi. 6). To the eye of the creature the final judgment and the first origin of evil is an equally dark abyss. In fine, we poor sons of man, to whom this word concerning the devil yet reaches some comfort, ought to rest satisfied with this: the tares *are there*, are actually manifest as such—and the good, wise, householder says: They are not

from me! *It is an enemy.* When, therefore, that heathen, urging the missionary for information beyond this point, asks, Why does God not slay the devil, (as even Kant relates in his Rel. innerhalb der Gränzen d. blossen Vernunft p. 100), it is better to be silent than with affected wisdom to say with *Daub* (Jud. Ischar. ii. 178) "He could only answer,—from love to thee." This unsatisfactory answer, however, Daub endeavours to confirm with no small acuteness.

Ver. 28, 29. The servants, with a modesty and contentedness with the answer they had received which might well be imitated by us, proceed no further theoretically, indeed, although *practically* they do. Quite naturally and pardonably, with a zeal, indeed, which is at least more laudable than the vain curiosity that might have inquired further, If thou knowest it why didst thou suffer it? Couldst thou not ward off the malice of the enemy, and protect this field? Hast thou then, the Master, been at fault, hast thou slept? they rather draw the hasty inference: If the hurtful and scandalous tares are not there with thy will, then wilt thou not that we act as faithful servants and get rid of them where and how we may be able? Who are these *servants*, and what is meant by this *rooting out?* Precisely these two things are omitted in the explanation which is given of the parable, an omission which many a commentator may have greatly regretted. But in the first place, Christ will thereby show that the centre point of the parable by no means lies (as is falsely supposed) in this prohibition to root out the tares, but really and only in the disclosure made in the words: The enemy hath done this! from which follows all that is further said in the way of setting their minds at rest, and the reference to the end of the world. Accordingly, it would have been somewhat superfluous to have said further to the apostles: Ye are these servants. They saw well enough, from the explanation of the rest of the parable, that they were represented by these persons, and would soon perceive this still more clearly when the parable was fulfilled in history. That which concerns our practice is made clear to us by practice, if only we give honest heed to Christ's word. The servants are plainly enough the workmen in the employment of their master, whose business it is to take care of the field until the harvest; and although they, at the same time,

are a part of the good seed, they are yet represented here as in their official character distinct from the field and belonging to the master.

A short and direct *No* comes from the mouth of Christ in reply to their question; and here (more than formerly in connexion with the sower) is the proper place for speaking of an extraordinary husbandry, in which the process is not the same as in the natural. For this is actually the import of the answer: here the case is quite different, and the thing is not done merely by your thus weeding out the tares. Just as it was not *you* who sowed the good seed, and who saw the enemy in the night, so neither are *you* the people for making a speedy end to the mischief! True it is, that in ordinary husbandry the weeds are carefully rooted out as much as possible (ver. 40 ὥσπερ συλλέγεται καὶ καίεται, as this is wont to be done), and the servants do not first ask whether they may or ought to do so; but here the master forbids it. Now, that we may rightly understand him, what does he forbid and what does he not forbid?[1] Above all things it is *not* the rooting out of tares by each individual from his own heart, which is, on the contrary, a duty strongly enjoined, for which we need only refer to Matth. v. 29, 30. Neither, further, are we to understand as meant a duty equally self-evident, namely, the combating all sins and lies proceeding from the devil by the good *word of God*, the word of truth—in which Christ himself has laid this down as an unconditional principle in chap. xv. 13.[2] We are not therefore to look on with open eyes and

[1] In Tholuck's Litt. Anzeiger 1847, there is a good review of the principal points connected with this question, showing how commentators have at all times given themselves pains with the answer to this question in its various aspects, and puzzled themselves with impertinencies which they have raised contrary to the parable. But when in that article Stier is classed with those interpreters who have not yet even touched the real difficulty, let it be remembered that the strict interpretation of ζιζάνια, which is there afterwards denoted as the only solution of the difficulty, had already been given precisely so by me, together with many other things, in which I think that I have hit the true sense not less successfully than has been done in that treatise.

[2] Here Thiersch for example is quite right when he renews the old distinction: The prohibition has respect not to evil *things* (false doctrine and ordinances to which the Catholic Church shows so much indulgence!) but to persons, to evil *ones*.

slack hands when, in open day, the enemy works mischief and puts hindrances in the way; we are by no means heedlessly and indifferently to let the darnel stand when we see it because it is there, much less are we to call it wheat. (Is. v. 20). Further, nothing is said here of the office of worldly magistrates whom God hath appointed to take vengeance on evil doers, even to the punishment of death, but only of that which the servants of Christ *as such* should or should not do in his Church, in his spiritual husbandry. There is no ground certainly for that distinction between *darnel* and other tares, on which, *e. g.* Melanchthon, Calvin, Bengel, and others lay great stress, as if open and gross sinners who are well known are by all means to be rooted out, but not the "outside Christians," as Wesley expresses it, who cannot be identified; for on the one hand it is taken for granted, that the servants knew well enough what was the after-wheat—and that not merely in the way of *presumption*, as is groundlessly maintained in Tholuck's *Anzeiger*—on the other hand, the explanation of the parable afterwards given includes actual σκάνδαλα among the tares which are to be allowed to remain. Should it be said (as is maintained there also), that these are only such as have *come to maturity* at the time of the harvest, while their doubtful beginning formerly afforded ground for the prohibition to root them out,—we cannot regard this distinction as in accordance either with the text or the thing itself; for assuredly from the very first there existed manifest offences enough, and it was precisely these that drew forth the question of the servants in the parable. Still (without our needing to justify this in opposition to the parable) all true Church discipline by the word, the key which looseth and bindeth even to the *putting away of the bad from the Church* (Matth. xviii. 17; 1 Cor. v. 13), retains its undisputed right; for this is so self-evident that on this very account the parable can contain no special reference to it, and may simply without any danger abide by that which it says. The parable moves in quite a different sphere from that of the question concerning Church discipline. The true explanation rather lies in this, that while even the strictest Church discipline reaches only in certain extreme cases to the *temporary* casting out in order to reformation, the question here respects the general removal without more ado of all that is essentially bad, spurious

in itself. The householder forbids and will not allow what the servants wish. These would have all the tares removed entirely from the field, from their place among the wheat, from the *kingdom* of Christ, ver. 41. But because the field is the world, that were equivalent to removing the bad out of the world (slaying the heretics), in order that the good may not, on their account, have to leave the world so as to have a pure field of God—and so strange a thing as this, the *impossibility* of which is at the same time self-evident, the servants themselves neither imagine nor wish, for in the original text they speak properly neither of weeding nor of rooting out, but of συλλέγειν, so that, as appears right to them, everything may properly be in its own place. They would like to have a pure field of pure wheat; and this to God's wisdom, goodness and justice is impossible. *They do not rightly know themselves what they would have* in their inconsiderately hasty word—and this is the key to the right understanding of it. For,—and we speak now beyond the figure, inasmuch as the words themselves truly point beyond the figure,—if the servants had gathered the tares, it would have been difficult for them to find out *where* to have put them, seeing that, as servants, they could not condemn, and the everlasting fire is as little in their power and at their command as any other world into which they might, in the meanwhile, deliver over and convey the evil-doers—any other, we say, because their duty is to bring the Gospel to the whole of this world as the field of Christ, but not to transport sinners beyond its limits as bad neighbours.

There is then good ground for the *No.* It duly acknowledges, at the sametime, their well-meant, not less laudable than inconsiderate earnestness and zeal; it is given not in the way of rebuke but of friendly instruction; hence, with what immediately follows, it does not remain a mere blunt negative, but takes the form of a confidential, condescending, instructive opening up of the ground and reason of the prohibition. If your clumsy hands were to be applied to the complete weeding out of the world and church-field, you would destroy the good with the bad! How! First, because in your shortsightedness you could not enough *distinguish* between them; the full-grown tare, as also the wheat, which has already come to fruit, you might know well enough, but the tender springing of the good seed from *ever successive*

sowings (τὸν χόρτον), you might, in your zeal (which would rather do too much than too little, so that you might only make thorough work of it), mistake many a blade of it for tares. Just as, on the other hand, many a future darnel would escape your detection.[1] Then the roots of the enemy's sowing lie so deep that you might not be able to get down to them, and there would be no end to your work, as the tares would always spring up again.[2] Further, in the third place: Even although you could rightly distinguish every blade, and could get down even to the undermost roots, you would yet, even against your will, pull away and root out the wheat ἅμα αὐτοῖς. For the *roots* of the two kinds of plant are as much intertwined with each other in the common earth as the plants on the surface, and even more so. Men in the world are, by the relationships of state, nation, family, and the like, so entwined with each other, and have so grown together, so to speak, that the hand of man must infallibly hurt the good, if at any cost it would entirely separate it from the bad.[3] So close *between* the wheat has the enemy in his cunning sown his tares, so thoroughly has he penetrated all the relations of men with his mischief, even those in which grace carries on its deep-laid work; but *God's* wisdom (not yours!) will keep watch over the good and the true, preserving the good and judging the evil-doers. Men have therefore to give good heed to that warning: Destroy it not, for there is a blessing in it (Is. lxv. 8), as also to the apostolical rule: The Lord hath given power to edify, not to destroy (2 Cor. xiii. 10). It is most true, then, that in weeding out the tares (as Hammann says), we should make *slow haste*, lest

[1] They have shown throughout the entire history of the Church, that they cannot yet perfectly distinguish between the tares and the wheat,—the greater the zeal so much the less have they been able!

[2] Outside the parable, which indeed speaks only of wheat and tares from the first sowing, lies the truth in itself right and important, that the tares also may, under God's patience, yet become wheat. In this does the word of Christ only thus touch the limit of the parable, that we should cherish the fear of rooting out *future* wheat along with the tares. Hieronymus: Monemur, ne cito amputemus fratrem, quia fieri potest, ut ille, qui hodie noxio depravatus est dogmate, cras resipiscat.

[3] Tares in general twine themselves very firmly above and under the earth. The darnel or cockle-weed, which is found with us among the oats, is moreover very difficult to root out, because it continues in the earth three years.

summum jus be perverted into *summa injuria*. Finally, when Zinzendorf, as Schubert informs us, had recourse to the expedient of pulling up and transplanting the *wheat*, this was just the same mistake in another form; in all such churches and congregations there is felt the necessity of preserving the tares which are ever again rising up among them, at least in the outward appearance and form of the wheat, so that they may be able to say at last: Here we have thoroughly weeded out! And then, with good intent indeed, they account for the growth of the worst tares by bringing the charge of base hypocrisy against such.[1] In short, the householder carries the point against his servants.

Ver. 30. In order completely to set their zeal at rest he kindly says still more to them, gives them an answer which goes beyond their question, and intimates to them in what this state of things which they are meanwhile to tolerate will at length issue, after having shown them *whence* it was. They are right in this, that tares are not wheat, and wheat is not tares, and further in this, that both cannot always remain mixed and together. Therefore he says: Leave the matter to me, it will be rightly attended to *in its proper season!* He names both classes, and therefore recognises only these two classes: the tares, which are in the least degree poisonous, are yet tares, and the humblest blade, with its one or two corns on the short light ear is yet true wheat; the least among the little is still a child of the kingdom, as he who only bears no fruit is still an evil-doer. The separation will not fail to take place when the evil which has come *amongst* the good in the world, the former and future kingdom of God, will be judged and done away with. But only when this *harvest* comes will be the right time for this; now is the season for necessary development towards maturity. This development is wonderfully attained, just by the fellowship of the good and the bad.[2]

[1] What Lange says here is not too sharply paradoxical, that these zealous servants (as Christ, elevated above their strong feeling, sees) would be more dangerous to the wheat than the enemy—nay, that the weeders who are still to be found in the field of wheat are guilty of an offence against the distinct command of Christ.

[2] Or as might also be said: of the called and the elected. For "it contradicts all ideas of Church and Christianity to attempt to fix the limits of the Church of the elect and to leave the Church of the called to itself." Nitzsch, pract. Theol. i., 197.

If the evil doers were all together on one land, what a hell upon earth! Therefore is their power broken, while apparently greater freedom is given to it. But if the good were all together undisturbed by the bad, would it not be desirable? By no means, for they are not yet perfectly good, and would not grow to maturity in righteousness without conflict and temptation, without the practice of faithfulness and love among sinners. Therefore only let both *grow* (Rev. xxii. 11) and grow *together* —which Matthew aptly expresses by the single word *συναυξάνεσθαι*. The harvest is the *end of the world, i.e.*, of this now mixed state and course of the world, *τοῦ αἰῶνος*, and the true reapers, better qualified and furnished for this than the servants who themselves belong to this *present* world, will be the *angels*, to whom Christ will in due time commit the work which he now forbids his servants to do. (Rev. xiv. 15). These angels are just as little figures of speech or parables as the devil is; both are realities by which the parable is explained.[1] First of all the tares are to be gathered together, so that the righteous may witness with hallelujahs the judgments of God, and all that was right and pure in their former zeal for God's kingdom and glory be satisfied; but the judged are put out like Judas in the night, when the Son of Man is glorified among his own. What *bundles* these will be—many smaller ones into the one great one—when those who have sinned together, in particular the seducers and seduced, will now also suffer punishment together, and pain determined by the strictest retributive justice will consummate such fellowship![2] That they may be *burned*—as is wont to be done to thorns and thistles and all tares, when any one has

[1] To understand with many (*e.g.* recently Zeller in Beuggen) by these angels (as opposed to the devil!) *men* risen from the dead, is an altogether unjustifiable caprice.

[2] It is only an ingenious application with a certain measure of truth, when Zeller remarks on these *bundles*, how the ecclesiastical, political, social tares, driven by the tendency to association, will more and more separate themselves from the ground of the Church, and unite in all sorts of societies, sects, clubs, &c. (As already Cocceius brought forward something similar in his, in other respects, very strange prophetico-historical interpretation.) The bundles in the text are bound by the angels evidently only at the end of the world—the associations of sinners formed already beforehand of themselves, only prefigure and pioneer the way for these.

cleansed a field of these (2 Sam. xxiii. 7). But put *the wheat* into *My* barn—He here reminds the people again of the Baptist's word, concerning *Him* who will thoroughly purge his floor and gather *His wheat* into the garner (chap. iii. 12); He thus, at the conclusion, as yet without any explanation, tells all who have ears to hear, who is the householder in this parable. Observe, at the sametime, the singular ἀποθήκην which will represent itself temporarily, in the purified Church of the latter time, finally, in the glorified earth.

Ver. 41—43. After some brief hints, he keeps for the disciples the more full and proper disclosure of the mighty consummation. First of all he now adds to the κατακαῦσαι of the parable in the repetition at ver. 41 an express πυρί, in order that having given a distinct meaning to every thing else he may also explain this figurative fire (chap. vi. 30) as the metaphor for another *real* fire, so that in this feature also the figure and the thing almost coincide, although the πῦρ ἄσβεστον of the Gehenna is of another kind from our present fire. So much only is certain from the place in which the words occur, that we are not at liberty to say of this *furnace of fire* that it is again a mere figure. It is the real lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20), of which already such passages as Ps. xxi. 10 remotely prophesy; it is by no means merely the expression taken from the furnace into which the grass is cast, or into which oriental despots, such as Nebuchadnezzar caused criminals to be cast. The wailing and gnashing of teeth (chap. viii. 12; xxii. 13; xxiv. 51) are to be understood in the same real sense, for these tares are not consumed in the eternal fire, else it would not be unquenchable, and they never again become wheat. The Son of Man will send His angels—this points back to the entire import of John i. 51, and forward to all the plain intimations concerning the judgment hereafter given as in Matth. xvi. 27; xxiv. 31; xxv. 31. *Stumbling-blocks* and *evil-doers* we find mentioned together already in Zeph. i. 3 (הַמַּכְשֵׁלוֹת אֶת־הָרְשָׁעִים), and in Job xxxviii. 13, mention is made of the evil doers who shall at one time be shaken out of the earth; passages which Christ has doubtless in mind here. The putting together of these two has for the most part been not rightly understood, inasmuch as the stumbling-blocks are taken to denote either, in the first place, the false teachers and dis-

turbers of the church (Rom. xvi. 17), or, on the other hand, the idea is supposed to be expressed that every evil-doer and worthless person in the kingdom of God, already by his very existence acts the part of a *σκάνδαλον* (as we have explained at chap. xii. 30). Christ, however, seems to speak here plainly of *things* and *persons:* in such a way, indeed, as that the evil-doers themselves again belong to the general conception of things that offend in the kingdom; still, by the latter being placed first, more is said than what can be explained of *individual* persons.[1] For there are offences brought into existence, indeed, by evil-doers, and continuing to live in evil-doers, which have often arisen at an early period, and then remain long, and continue to work their mischievous effects. "Religious and ethical *heresies*," according to the common usage of the phrase, is not comprehensive enough; there are stones of stumbling, evils, corruptions of the most various kinds, as *political*, &c. All these (*πάντα τὰ σκάνδαλα*, so that not one shall be overlooked or left behind) shall then be removed with the judgment of those who have raised them up, or who have fallen upon them, and been broken.

Then remain the righteous, who are matured and perfected in righteousness. What a separation! This takes place, indeed, by virtue of the necessary internal attraction of what is homogeneous, as soon as God looses the bonds of the present order of things; but he will also employ his heavenly servants in the doing of this for His own honour and their happiness, as a reward of their faithful services to the children of men, and as a final recompence of their perseverance in righteousness. Then it will be seen that it was no punishment or injury to the wheat to stand among the tares, but rather that it has been thereby ripened for the garner. Then will the righteous who, hitherto, have borne the light of God within them or have been obscured from without, *shine forth*, from this concealment: *ἐκλάμψουσιν* as in Wis. iii. 7, *ἀναλάμψουσιν*, and Dan. xii. 3, Cod. Alex. also *ἐκλάμψουσιν*. This is the simple sense of the word, and it contains no answer to the foolish question of Origen, the father of

[1] To go back to the figure, as it were the stones (of offence) and the tares.

those who hold a final restoration: "For whom will they shine but for those who are below, who are to become partakers of their light as the sun gives them light upon earth? For they will surely not shine for themselves!" They will shine in and for God's glory, just as the sun now shines before it appears, and where it does not appear to men. *As the sun:* this is an explanation of Daniel's splendour of the heavens (זֹהַר הָרָקִיעַ), which means Christ the sun of righteousness, whom all his righteous ones shall resemble in glory, but at the same time, and first of all, it is to be understood also physically, according to what we find more particularly stated in 1 Cor. xv. 40, 41. In *their Father's* kingdom: that is the highest and last, whereas the kingdom of heaven hitherto upon earth is called only *His*—the Son of Man's; for it extends to the time when the Son shall give over the kingdom to the Father. It means: they shall be called *children of God* (chap. v. 9, as the others of the evil one) and God shall honour them as a Father as highly as he can—"glory in them as a rich father in his well-bred children" (Val. Herberger). And at the conclusion of the *explanation* Christ adds for the disciples, as before at the first parables for the people, the awakening call: Who hath ears to hear let him hear!

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED.

(Matt. xiii. 31—33; Mark iv. 30—32; Luke xiii. 18—21).

Grow till the harvest! The parable that follows connects with this conclusion of the foregoing, and contains first of all the prophecy that the small and imperceptible seed would yet grow to something great, that from the present sowing of the husbandman and householder (and the people must have in part perceived who was thereby meant), which had to encounter so much opposition and hindrance, there would spring up in due season a heavenly *kingdom* upon earth, as well, at least, as any other so-called kingdom. *But when it is grown*—this is, in respect of the sense, to be understood in the future; as in Mark the growing is still more strongly marked as the principal point by

the twofold expression ἀναβαίνειν and ποιεῖν κλάδους μεγάλους.[1] But as already in the two foregoing parables the second contained the explanatory ground of the first, so here the *leaven* stands in the same relation to the *grain of mustard-seed.* The reason why the small seed of the kingdom of heaven which is sown in the world grows and spreads to such an extent is, that it has a *penetrating,* transforming, inwardly quickening power, a power to lay hold on everything around it. Such growth is carried on, therefore, also outwardly before the eyes of men; not thus alone, however, but still more by an unseen efficacy. As has already been said above, Christ here still views the progressive development of his kingdom as a whole, but he makes at the same time a notified transition to the esoteric parables, which exhibit the real existence and continued possession of that kingdom in the souls of those individuals who, with self-denial, lay hold on it. With the extension and penetration in the mass there is mingled not a little of false appearance, which, only in virtue of its pointing to the genuine growth and leavening that takes place in the true children of the kingdom, still retains a certain figurative truth. If, in the first parable, greater prominence was given to the individual, and in the second to the kingdom as a whole, the two following should now be understood as if in addition to these it were said: The kingdom of heaven, *viewed as a whole and in its individual members,* is like, &c.

In Mark, ver. 30, the Rabbinical formula τίνι ὁμοιώσωμεν κ. τ. λ. stands before, which recurs also in Luke xiii. 18, likewise a ground for the conjecture, that Luke there inserts, by way of repetition, what had been spoken before—if we do not find any connection in that place (which appears to to me almost impossible) to warrant the supposition of an actual repetition by Christ. At all events, it is to be supposed that Christ really, as Mark has it, spoke in the striking form of *we,* wherewith he, as it were, unites in counsel with Himself, and in the most friendly manner engages to a favourable hearing, if not the people, at least the disciples who were around him. Such a communicative form of address (for it is such, and John iii. 11 is falsely compared with

[1] Here already, therefore it is not merely growth in respect of size or height, but also of length and breadth—as Roos quite superficially would thus distinguish between the third and fourth parables.

it) is, in the mouth of Christ, an infinitely greater condescension than when Paul in his epistles says: What shall we then say?

The change of the figure, which was calculated as well to rouse the attention as to show the thing itself in new aspects, lies not merely in this, that now again the entire kingdom itself appears as a seed-corn, but the transition is now also made from the noblest and most important product of the earth for man, the claims of which have already been acknowledged by the use made of it in the foregoing parables, to another species; from corn and wheat to garden products and herbs (*λάχανα*); hence while in Matthew the expression *ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ αὐτοῦ* recurs, just as at ver. 24, and Mark has the more indefinite *ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*, Luke says definitely *εἰς κῆπον ἑαυτοῦ*. The *mustard-seed* is the smallest of all seeds—by the *ἐπι τῆς γῆς*, which is repeated here in Mark, might be understood: which are sown in the earth by the hand of man. It is still further to be supplied, as there are indeed smaller seeds: in proportion to the greatness of the herb. And although even this should not be literally true, as, for example, our acorn as compared with the oak might make the superlative questionable, still the *proverbial force* of the expression remains (and Christ was ever ready to avail himself of such proverbs), which seems to be hinted at here, especially by the *ὁμοιώσωμεν*: To use a common saying in this country. (Where, for example, there were no *poppies* as has been observed.) The Rabbins called the mustard מִין זְרָעִים, only a sort of seed (quasi-seed), and כְּחַרְדָּל *as a mustard-seed* is proverbial with them for any very small thing, as, for example, Maimonides (in More Nebochim) contrasts the circle of the heavens with the mustard-seed, as the smallest possible thing, כְּחַכְלִית הַקְּטַנּוּת. In like manner, there are to be found in their writings accounts of the sometimes extraordinary size of the mustard plant in the East, as of one with three branches, one of which covered a potter's tent, of another on which the owner climbed up as on a fig tree. Accordingly Christ says truly, that this *λάχανον*, contrary to the general rule, becomes a *δένδρον*, as being, so to speak, the miracle in nature of great growth, so that we are not under the necessity of supposing the more indefinite meaning of the Heb. עֵץ. Along with the proverbial, however, he here also (as in the *darnel* before)

glances at the typical element in natural history, according to which a particular seasoning, quickening, and leavening virtue is ascribed to the mustard-seed. That he has this before his mind is to be supposed from its being placed side by side with the parable of the leaven, for which it prepares the way; although to keep by this as the principal point and to carry it out, would be insipid indeed. But this twofold reference to nature itself, and to the form of speech among men derived from it, is not enough; the figure in the way in which it is carried out points back farther to the *Holy Scripture*, as we found was the case also in the second parable. For precisely in connection with those beginnings of the prophecy of Isaiah in chap. xi. 1 and iv. 2 (from which Christ had here taken the citation, chap. vi. 9, 10, and many other hints), stands that word in Ezek. xvii. 22—24, where, literally as here, the Messiah and His kingdom is compared to a *high tree* grown from a tender twig, so that all birds dwell under the shadow of its branches. Great tree—this is generally the prophetic figure for the kingdoms of the world, as may be seen farther in Ezek. xxxi. 3—14, Dan. iv. 7—9, where there is always the characteristic notice of the birds dwelling in it. Observe, therefore, by what a wise selection, by what an ingenious allusion, Christ here speaks thus and no otherwise of the *kingdom* of heaven: if even earthly kingdoms grew from small beginnings to great power and extent, much more would this kingdom not be wanting in similar growth. Observe further how, precisely by this figure, the *outward* appearance of the Church in the world is denoted also in respect of its might and power to afford protection, as being also a *kingdom* like great kingdoms.[1] If therefore not directly *state-churches* (which are only the dangerous and never entirely to be averted consequence of the thing in its imperfection), yet certainly national-churches are according to the mind and will of Christ. What then are the birds but, in the first place, the many men and nations who are brought beneath the shelter of this protecting structure. (In Homer ἔθνεα πολλὰ πετεινῶν.) They *come*, in

[1] Lange well observes in his interpretative manner: As the mustard-seed even changes its species, passing from a herb to a sort of tree, so does the kingdom of heaven pass into the species and likeness of a great world-state.

the missionary time when the Church is being set up with power and honour, like doves to their windows (Isa. lx. 8). They either sing under the branches of the tree which Christ has planted for them, Ps. civ. 12, 16, 17 (being now true birds *of heaven* in the kingdom of heaven), the praise of Him who has prepared a house and rest for them in His altars (Ps. lxxxiv. 4, 5)—the reader will pardon this play upon all these sacred figures which run into each other—or they dwell without knowing it under the shadow and shelter (see Mark) which outward Christendom with its manifold blessings affords.

Is not this the history of the Church with its great and mighty facts represented in an interesting figure, especially for a certain period, which was spoken of above? One cannot cease from comparing the little mustard-seed in the field or garden of Judea, with this shadowing tree of the nations, and from paying devout homage to Him who has here so simply foretold this. *Maximum ex minimo, in minimo*—this is the principle that obtains in the wonders of nature, but it is still more in history, and most of all, finally, in the internal history of the kingdom of God in the heart, the sign and seal of the divine operation, of divine power in the new creation of grace. As a man knows indeed what a small mustard-seed he has sown quietly and unobserved on his field, so the counsel of God by Christ here testifies, and the import here is: With these prophetical words as to the will and counsel of God the fact agrees, it has been so, and will ever be so before our eyes. But it could not be *otherwise*. Trust not to anything great in this world which is not small in its beginning, for then it grows not from the kernel, then in all probability the tree begins from the branches ere it has roots. He who would work deeply and widely in the kingdom of Christ must go with Christ into the depths, and then the result of his labours as regards their breadth will be seen in due time.

Let us now, however, enquire more particularly what is the period in the history of the Church when first the grown-up tree spreads forth its sheltering branches! Yes, the sign of Jonah has become to the world a preaching of repentance, the cross a heavenly sign of victory, the Roman empire becomes a Roman kingdom of heaven, a Church of Christ, a Catholic

Church for the barbarians of all lands. The hosts of wanderers in the migrations of the people turn into this home. But is this now really the true and genuine kingdom of heaven, so that the outward appearance corresponds to its internal nature? By no means! The victory of Christianity over the world leads to its secularization: Here first, in right earnest, the pernicious darnel grows luxuriantly, the false Christians and after-Christians (after-wheat) crowding round the imperial throne and the bishop's seat, and a *leaven* of wickedness and knavery is at work. They maintain a controversy about Easter which does not sound like a pleasant song of praise among the branches; the new Pharisees and Sadducees come, the return to the fundamental errors of Israel in the Old Testament, errors which the cross ought to have destroyed, strongly progresses, and many Samaritans, if not even Ammonites, take part unhindered in the building of the temple. On such a view, it is more pardonable in some commentators than at first sight we might be willing to allow, when they have understood the *leaven* in the following parable (as everywhere else in Scripture it denotes what is bad) to represent the remaining corruption in the Church.[1] This certainly needs no refutation, for Christ does not say: the kingdom of heaven is like three measures of meal into which a woman who is an enemy mixes her leaven (something like the wickedness in the ephah, Zech. v. 6—8)—but *like a leaven* which a woman took, just as a grain of mustard seed which a man sowed. Moreover, in Luke xiii. 18, where these two parables stand alone, it is not possible to suppose that they contain a prediction of the corruptions in the Church, as, for example, the Berleburgher Bible, which maintains this in reference to Matthew, must itself acknowledge. But if in the figure of the mustard-seed we found so manifold a reference, may not the reason why Christ here selects precisely that of the leaven be, that there is in it a *side*

[1] The writing "On the decree of God," &c. (Frankf. 1847), so strongly tinctured with Irvingism, goes so far as to say, that not only the leaven is intended to prophesy the falling-away, but (with absurd cross-interpretation) the *mustard-seed* also. For its tree has no fruit, while under its foliage nestle the seed-devouring birds of the evil one! And that is called "the only scriptural interpretation of these two parables."

glance at the evil leaven which his prophetic eye must have also foreseen, when he spoke of the tree? Indeed, the leavening, seasoning meal is, first of all, itself the last form of the fruit in which it begins to work anew, to nourish, to shew itself after the manner of the mustard-seed,—and for the rising of the dough into palatable bread, the leaven is good. And yet Christ, as we everywhere see, can never entirely forget the further significance of the figures of nature in the types of Scripture; and if, ever since the passover and sacrifices of Israel, this word has the bad sense which He himself in other places gives to it, could He fail to have this also before His mind now? He had it in His mind, and precisely on purpose *placed in opposition to* it His *good* leaven, the heavenly leaven. To understand him thus, was so natural on the first surprise occasioned by the figure (so that the hearer must have asked: How? the kingdom of heaven too a leaven?), that I at least cannot wonder enough at finding in no commentator this idea, which yet first opens up the innermost meaning of the parable, and concedes to that mistaken interpretation what of truth belongs to it. Christ will say: With this expansion of the small seed in the field of the world, the tares of corruption will mingle all the more powerfully (like a leaven), *but the good seed will notwithstanding choke the thorns*, the mustard seed will gain the victory, what is heavenly will also mingle itself with every mixture, in a word, *will show itself as a subduing anti-leaven.*[1] Thus we have the true, the entire sense of this ambiguous expression, the application of which is here changed from what is bad to what is good.

The ἐγκρύπτειν, which occurs only here in the New Testament, derives its emphasis first of all from this. The subduing power of the little, which yet, as it spreads, must disunite and become apparently ever less and less, will operate with such profound internal *secrecy* in the world and in man. The "little bit word of God" spread throughout the whole life of nations! They are both the same meal, only the one is already leavened, the other is still to be leavened with the word of God, that it

[1] This is something quite different from what Richter's House Bible means: the *mixed* degeneracy and sinfulness of the no longer apostolically pure Church which now extends itself, is *at the same time* meant.

may receive taste and relish to be used as bread. The whole then remains just as it was,—meal or man,—for God's renewing grace does not do away with what is creaturely, it does not break up and destroy the principle or forms of life that have existed in nations and individuals from their first creation.[1] *The three Seahs*, which together make an ephah, appear in Scripture as the usual measure of a complete batch, Gen. xviii. 6; Jud. vi. 19; 1 Sam. ii. 24. Christ has chiefly in mind the first of these passages, that well-known one concerning Sarah's baking for the Lord in Mamre, as the kneading is also particularly noticed there. In so far, however, as he means the whole world, all mankind, the number three may farther point to the three quarters of the globe then known, or more correctly still, when viewed as a prophecy, stretching throughout all future time, it may have reference to the three Sons of Noah, by whom every land is possessed, and in whom the prophetical word sees represented the whole seventy nations. This is no trifling, but quite consistent with the everywhere harmonious sense of Scripture. Into this entire popular life with its state developments, its art, science, wisdom, and folly, war and peace, into the entire history of the world, the good leaven enters with its secretly penetrating and subduing power, and at last it gains the upper hand. The new struggles, indeed, with the old in fermentation, and neither will bear the presence of the other, but the kneader takes care that it gets within, and through the fermentation the batch is produced. (In Ez. iv. 12, where an ἐγκρυφίας ἄρτος is spoken of, ἐγκρύπτειν is used for עגג.) Luther says on this: "Just as it is impossible that the leaven, after it is once mixed with the dough, can ever again be separated from it, because it has changed the nature of the dough, in like manner is it also impossible that Christians can be severed from Christ. The dough is leavened, Satan cannot separate it from the leaven, let him boil or fry, roast or burn it, the leaven Christ remains in it, and will remain till the last day, till all are thoroughly leavened who are saved." We say in addition to

[1] Braune: As the dough is internally related to the leaven, so is the man internally related to the kingdom of God. When Zeller places the entire parable in the last time, on the ground that then only after the judgment shall humanity be really prepared for the *meal*, we cannot agree with him. What would the leaven be then?

this: Even Feuerbach and Bauer's worst leaven is at least penetrated by the opposition to Christianity, precisely thereby is it brought into prominence, and therefore is it already infected with the principle which finally overcomes.

Who now is the *woman* who carries on the important work of kneading? It were superficial to say that the γυνή here is merely parallel to the ἄνθρωπος, ver. 31, because women bake as men sow, seeing that there are everywhere γυναῖκες σιτοποιοί; for the position of the words (which is never to be regarded as indifferent), is now strikingly changed. In the first parable we have merely the *sower* with the story about his seed; in the second the recurring superscription begins: *The kingdom of heaven* is like *a man (coelestium similitudines ex humanis)*, which, in the third and fifth, is only somewhat transposed,[1] and appears again literally in the sixth. (On the other hand, in the seventh, where the work of separation by the angels is the principal point of view, every ἄνθρωπος or ἄνθρωποι, disappears in a passive and general "one.") If, however, the ἄνθρωπος who sowed the mustard-seed was still the heavenly sower himself, the γυνή appears already to make the *transition* to the fifth and sixth parables, where the ἄνθρωποι are *other persons*, those, namely, who now *receive*, find and seek that which is given from heaven, and is within their reach, who *themselves work it out*. Thus the λαβοῦσα now obtains a farther sense, and is to be taken more strictly than the foregoing λαβών. For the mustard-seed is as yet the first form of the heavenly seed which God put into the earth, but the leaven is a thing already there in relative perfection, a thing which has been made in a former and first baking. To take this and to make further use of it requires human co-operation and labour. We shall afterwards find and show, at Luke xv. 4, 8, that there the *woman* is really *the Church*, namely, the true Church in which *the spirit* lives, through which

[1] Against the interpretation of Wächtler (afterwards to be spoken of), let it only be mentioned in the meantime that the "kingdom of heaven" is a quite special term, the thing compared in all these parables, therefore the apparently strictly grammatical position is not valid, that the kingdom of heaven, ver. 45, might be likened to the pearl, not to the merchant. When Plato speaks of his σοφία that is something quite different. (Stud. und Krit. 1849.)

he works (Rev. xxii. 17); referring in passing to this proof, afterwards to be adduced, we do not stay to find here, as there, the work of the *Spirit* throughout the Church in the wonderful Divine-human *thorough working* of the dough by the powerful hands of this woman.[1] For this the world-Romish, pseudo-catholic missionary church, is only the historical parable, and thus in the last of the exoteric parables a forcible reference is made from the external appearance to the *internal* truth.

Until *the whole* is leavened,—or until the meal is leavened *through and through* (ὅλον equivalent to ὅλως)? If this, in the fullest and most proper sense, is never true of the entire dough of mankind—for what then would be made of the tares and the separation at the end?—it is yet true individually and personally of the elect. These find the treasure which lies hid everywhere in the field, they seek and value the one pearl which, in a manifold way, offers itself to every one who knows it, so that he may entirely possess himself of it; in them the *soul* works through the might and impulse of the spirit, selling all and thus obtaining all, until the whole man is leavened. And, in this depth of the microcosm, Olshausen's explanation of the three measures by *spirit, soul, and body*, which he brings in too soon, may find its confirmation; for,—as those who have looked deeper have long since seen,—Shem, Japhet, and Ham, in the microcosm of the world's history, *correspond* to this trichotomy of human nature. The little mustard seed in the individual is now, as Christ also says elsewhere, the first small spark of living faith which removes all mountains, and from the small beginnings of the first graces and prayers, the sanctifying new life at length penetrates as a leaven the whole man, if he on his part does not neglect these two things, to continue in patient growth, and diligently to co-operate in the ἐγκρύπτειν.

[1] To knead in—that is the true work which the hand of God will have done by our hands—not to pluck out! The woman appears here as strong, if we keep in view the interpretation—by no means (as Braune thinks) as "a weak woman"—as also a child may bring the kingdom of God into a house!

THE TREASURE IN THE FIELD. PEARL AND NET.

(Matth. xiii. 44—50.)

As the householder in the parable has, in his answer, gone beyond the question of the servants, and shown in addition to the whence? also the whither? so Jesus, with the explanation which the disciples asked, goes on to give them the two next parables over and above, which then, by the conclusion of the third, vers. 49, 50, lead back to vers. 41—42; consequently this entire supplement of the treasure, pearl, and net, are, as it were, a developing application, a deeper explanation of the foregoing *separation*. Would *you*, as righteous, at one time shine like the sun—as those who turn many to righteousness like the brightness of heaven? Now mark and *hear* what I have further to say:—The kingdom of heaven is *again* like—becomes, the nearer it draws to the separation, ever more perfectly like to a thing *hid*, which indeed one may *find* unsought, but in order to get and keep which, one must renounce everything else; which, finally, must even be *sought* with the greatest earnestness, must be bought at the cost of the complete renunciation of everything else. Those who do this are the righteous.[1]

According to Jewish conceptions, the kingdom of the Messiah was to be the most manifest thing in the world, and it was the will of Christ (chap. v. 14, 15), that the light in his followers should shine clearly before all the world (ἐκλάμπειν, ver 43), as a city set on an hill; yet he says here beforehand that it will unfortunately *not* be so, least of all in the last times of trial before the judgment, in the times of obscuration caused by the *mixture* which

[1] In the general survey which we took beforehand, it was already said that, in the three last parables, it is the inner state and progress of the kingdom of heaven in the *individual persons* that is spoken of. It is therefore, however, *not merely* meant that the kingdom of heaven will (as Lange thinks) at *every* period remain a concealed treasure "for the individuals—even as a world-religion," but the parables really at the same time advance forward to a later period when that will be more the case than before.

comes not merely from the devil, but is, on the other hand, also the result of the Divine purpose, so as to bring the leaven into contact with everything that may be at all susceptible of it. The *treasure* hid in the *field* is, on the one hand (in connection with the second parable), still the precious *seed*, but at the same time also (now entirely departing from this figure) a *treasure*, or a precious possession in general. The field in which this treasure lies hid is the outside of the kingdom as existing in the world, viz., *Word* and *Church*.[1] Ah! how many treasure-seekers pass by, how many treasure-diggers dig beside it, because their eye and heart are turned towards another false treasure! because (to speak with Lange), they seek their bread just as in husbandry, only in a "decent conformity to the outward ordinances of worship," without truly *seeking* the Gospel which lies hid "deep beneath the law" (the outward ordinances, institution, &c.), like the merchant afterwards mentioned who aimed higher. The real treasure is so near them, they tread upon it and might lay hold on it with the hand, if they but knew the right spot. Luther says again: "Learn from this to know the kingdom of heaven; many seem to possess it who possess it not, and he who truly has it, seems as if he had it not." They even diligently cultivate the field of the Church so that it may bear them—happiness and comfort in this life; but they do not see the real treasure therein, nor bring it out. Why then do they not *find* it, as well as this one in the parable, who is of course the representative of all true believers in common? It is not said that he sought or dug for it; the *hid* treasure then must have lain *open* enough to every true finder. It is to be observed that this finder is not, and does not need to be, *such* a seeker as the merchant in the next parable, but yet that he has something of his spirit and character; for he at least *discerns* and *lays hold* on what he has found. These two parables again represent two things which properly belong to each other, the offered grace of

[1] And that especially at a time, when "the kingdom of God is as it were buried beneath the clods of false Christianity, of superstition, human ordinances, and ceremonies." (Roos). And we would say further: also under a good divinely-established ecclesiasticism—for the field must be bought.

God and endeavour on the part of man; although these two come specially into prominence in different periods.

The fortunate finder now wants to have only the treasure, as the merchant the pearl, *yet for this he buys the field.* Is this, perhaps, merely a feature in the parable without particular significance? Then it would at least represent the *wisdom* to be used in acquiring the spiritual substance, such as the children of this world use in reference to the earthly: in order that he may make sure of not losing his discovery by any other finding it, he again covers it up and buys the piece of land; as its purchaser the treasure would at that time, according to Jewish and partly also to Roman law, belong to him. Nor was this any injustice to the possessor, who was leaving his best property to spoil in the earth, and knew neither to find nor to value it; how, otherwise, should the right man for such a treasure get it? With still less propriety could Christ say: and he stole it, carried it off!—If any one is satisfied with such an explanation of this part of the parable we leave it to him, but it appears to us that the buying of the field really contains in it the deeper truth, namely, that one cannot get the treasure without the field, *i.e.* that no one can have the jewel of the kingdom of heaven in the heart without the appropriation of all the outward institutions which guard it, without the right use of all its means of grace (in vain possessed by so many). We have no sympathy, then, with such an interpretation as this: the good man had only not strength enough immediately to carry off the treasure alone; for the way in which he acted is manifestly praised, as being that which led rightly to the end he had in view. Dost thou discover, by the revelation of God graciously vouchsafed to thee, the living word of regeneration, and the true Church, remember that neither of these comes into thy heart in the way of the Separatists, so as that thou mayest abstract it from the external word and sacraments in the degenerate Church; for the treasure belongs to the field, the buyer of the first must also become the true possessor of the other. But as this is entirely an inward affair of the heart, it must be done secretly, and without the knowledge of those enviers who might follow the treasure, although they did not themselves value it or use it, or who, as mockers, might throw it away as

if it were old rusty iron. The true finder *hides* what he has found, as in the field from profane eyes, so in his heart, *i.e.* shuts it already in his overjoyed heart, ere he properly has it. This seems to be the true meaning of the figure which is not otherwise to be pressed. And now he betakes himself in haste and in earnest, *in the joy* of his heart (a more deeply-seated joy than that in ver. 20) to selling and buying. For he must give up all his property for it, as is meant in Luke xiv. 33, and more particularly carried out by the apostle in Phil. iii. 7—10; this is the concluding point in which the two parables of the treasure and the pearl coincide.

When *Wächtler* recently persists in maintaining, even after *Steffensen* has adduced clear reasons against it (which we will not now repeat) a strangely inverted explanation of the parable of the pearl, let it suffice that we mention it here; it scarcely needs any special *refutation* for the sake of those who in any way agree with it, beyond our positive development of the general understanding of the parable. We have already spoken of the strikingly tenacious adherence to the grammar as respects the formula of comparison. "As the merchant goes forth to seek goodly pearls, so does the *kingdom of heaven also go forth* to seek goodly subjects"—this is held to be the only possible meaning, yet this proposition already sounds so strangely as to frighten us away from it. To correct a possible misunderstanding of the former parable, as if the man can only thus accidentally find the treasure, the design of this parable is said to be to show how the kingdom of heaven (Christ) rather seeks man. The good pearls are—"the souls who let themselves be saved and made children of God, the elect." And what is the one precious pearl? First of all it is said to be: "those that are most disposed towards Christ, to whom he entirely yields himself," (as if to sell all and to buy could mean to give, and entirely to yield himself!) Afterwards, as an improvement on this, it is said to be "the communion of the saints, the invisible Church," out which, indeed, there can be no good pearls. And here may also be mentioned the turn which also *Scriver*[1] has given to the thing (although more in the way of accommodation—"it *might* be so

[1] Third Sermon of the first part, in my edition i. 77.

explained") when he says, that the pearl shows the great value in the eye of Christ of a human soul which is to be saved. But we still think that treasure and pearl are to be taken together in the same sense, the kingdom of heaven alone can be the pearl found by the seeker,—this explanation alone corresponds to the entire system of the seven parables, and confirms itself on every side. The "*doctrine of Scripture*" which is opposed to this, "that the man is not the subject who effectually seeks the Saviour, but the object who is effectually sought by the Saviour," has not much weight here, inasmuch as the Scripture, with no less perfect propriety, speaks often of our seeking, our selling, yielding ourselves up, bringing ourselves to, &c.

As Solomon, Prov. iii. 13—15, and Job, chap. xxviii. 15—19, compare true wisdom with gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, or rather exalt it above them, the parable would be already somewhat intelligible to the disciples from this allusion to the Scripture. Still the meaning here goes much deeper than what was there said of the "fear of God;" the *pearl*, as a treasure and possession, is here still more represented with reference to the *obtaining* and *appropriating* of it than was the case with the treasure lying in the field and waiting for the finder. (Just as in chap. vii. 6, that which is holy and *your* pearls; also in Prov. iii. 13 and Job xxviii. 12, the finding, the obtaining, is the principal idea). It is the real "stone of the wise," whose true name no one knows but he who has it, and who bears the great εὕρηκα in his heart: this last and most internal parable needs and admits in the least degree of explanation by many other words. The ἄνθρωπος ἔμπορος, seafarer or travelling merchant (*Kleuker:* who travels for jewels) possesses as a δόκιμος τραπεζίτης, that *wisdom* which we found also in the buyer of the field, even in a higher degree, for he *seeks* really *good*, *genuine* pearls. But the nearer it draws to the end in the church, the more necessary will this testing wisdom be, in order to find what is sought; for not merely is true Christianity hid by the manifest falling away (which is not so much pointed at here), but amid the motley mart of confessions, sects, and opinions, the perplexing cry which is to precede the coming of the Lord, Lo He is here, lo He is there, in this chamber or in that desert, amid the manifold forms

of Christianity, each of which praises its own books, its own agencies, its confessions or societies, there is need of a good understanding in the seeking heart; nor is any society of brethren with their Bohemian stories the true field which one has only to buy.[1] That the seeker first of all seeks pearls in the plural shows, that he has not yet learned (and this is natural enough) the experience which he will obtain after he has found, and of which the church loudly enough holding forth that experience sings: "If I get this one thing, which compensates for all, then shall I in this one thing enjoy everything"—or as it might with equal truth be said: then shall I enjoy this one thing in everything. Therefore Christ says here, ἕνα πολύτιμον μαργαρίτην, while before, in the Sermon on the Mount, He himself speaks of *pearls* in the plural. The men who offer them for sale according to their appearance know the precious one themselves just as little as that owner of the field knew of his treasure; and yet it is not to be bought from these ignorant possessors as a thing of trifling value, but Christ himself,—who so wonderfully offers for sale his holy jewel, that he on his part may try the triers, and bring it to the true man who is worthy of it—gives it upon no other terms than those which Solomon has already mentioned: *for all that he has.* (Prov. iv. 7.) He who will rather continue *seeking*, and who goes back when it comes to the great *discovery*, he who begins to cheapen so as that he may still retain something of his own, cannot obtain it. But he who goes on and offers violence to the kingdom of heaven, and who boldly counts out the great price in the face of the mockery of the spectators and traders, he is the true buyer. Oh! what a gracious word about *buying*,[2] when yet the price consists only in our

[1] That (according to Roos) again at a later period the pearl may be freely bought even without the *shell* (corresponding to the field before) we think quite wrong, because the *seeking* is precisely intended to denote a distinguishing from the spurious as the result of investigation,—its costliness therefore does not lie open on the surface. The two parables are not at all thus to be combined.

[2] At which Wächtler takes very groundless offence, since only a predominant *receptivity* is conceded to *us*. Does he forget all those passages of Scripture which speak quite otherwise also of our doing, yielding ourselves, venturing, exchanging, holding fast?

entire poverty, debt, and misery! But what righteousness and truth in this, that the pearl is yet so dear, and assuredly in no other way to be obtained! That which in earthly things were a foolish whim is here the highest wisdom.

In opposition to this second last parable—which, in the *one* buyer, has shown us the small number of true possessors as opposed to the foolish multitude, and the hidden Church, as, *so to speak*, itself the treasure in the field, the pearl obtained *by Christ for himself* (for so now, comparing anew, may we invert the sentiment)—comes the last of the series, which shows, on the other hand, the great mixture in the wide net, thus again turning back, but now it is only to bring into prominence the inevitable *separation* as the chief and concluding idea, by the final οὕτως ἔσται. If, in a former parable, the tares were sown against the will of Christ by his enemy, we have here the other and innermost side of the thing, namely, that it was notwithstanding *according to the counsel and will* of Christ! He who there says: Let both grow together! had also said before: Let the enemy sow! and in holy love, a love which goes beyond all the malice of Satan, a place was given to the tares in his field, if haply wheat might yet be made out of them through the miraculous power of the opposing leaven. The bad fishes, too, were purposely fished and drawn in along with the others. If any one were still in doubt as to the meaning of that saying: the *world* is the field,—his doubts must be set at rest when he finds here the bad who are to be cast out distinctly represented as being *in the net*, which is certainly not the same as *the sea*, but is drawn through the entire sea. The kingdom of heaven is not something specially set apart for any outward Israel, nation, or country, but the great *sea* of nations is its sphere, the restless raging sea of fallen humanity (a figure pervading the whole of Scripture, for one example of which we would now only refer to Ps. lxv. 8). Into this sea it sinks as a net hid beneath the waters. Christ will have infant baptism, conversions, national churches, and all that belongs to such a penetration of the leaven into the entire dough; and the Catholic Church, although in itself an untrue type, is yet right in its maintenance of this truth against the most well-meant, erring separatism. The wide σαγήνη, the great *drawe-*

net of God, is πάναγρος, it works and draws with it whatever it finds, whatever comes in its way.[1] This net has many nooses, many small nets which here and there many a fisher of men throws out, and that not merely like Peter, "at Christ's word," but many only προφάσει (Phil. i. 18) at their own hand; nay more, even against his knowledge and will must Pilate write the superscription of the cross, and Caiaphas prophesy of the scattered children of God who find the truth therein. All things in the world's history must work together for good, for the *calling* of those whom the eternal purpose hath distinguished; the history of the world is itself the history of the Church, and has in it the great net which the one great fisher of men, with all the nets and hands which are helpful to him, draws by his strong hand to the shore. As the fishes are sometimes *taken in an evil net, and the sons of men snared in an evil time* (Eccles. ix. 12)—so man also knows not his time, when the good hand of God which draws into the kingdom of heaven comes upon him for the first time. The fishes are in the net ere they know it, even when they think they are still free to swim in the sea, for the net hides itself from them.[2] Ye fishers who, as wise and faithful servants, would follow out the mind of Christ, draw gently that you may not scare away many a draught. The water itself must move about in the net, the sin of the world must prepare for the universally offered grace of God, the raging of the nations and kingdoms must help on the kingdom of heaven and the gathering of the people of God; many a leviathan is caught, and although he would fain get out yet cannot break the strong net.

Thus, indeed, it brings together ἐκ παντὸς γένους, *i.e.* great and small, high and low, distinguished and obscure, whatever there is in the water (Ps. civ. 25). But with all this variety, there are only two kinds of which at last account is taken, (see chap. xxii. 9, 10). In τὰ καλά and τὰ σαπρά the fishes are purposely not at all expressly mentioned, nor are they throughout the whole

[1] "Those missionaries are bad fishers who, even at the first would separate the fishes (by baptism). They should take much more pains to catch them in masses, instead of losing time in unapostolical discriminating." Richter's Bible.

[2] It is not precisely right with Braune to lay emphasis on: they are *caught*, because the kingdom of God appears to them at first as a letter.

parable; ἰχθύδια is not to be supplied (seeing that עֲצוּמִים and תַּנִּינִים were also caught), but the neuter is to be understood in the same way as καινά καὶ παλαιά in ver. 52. The sea of the world and the kingdom's history has a *shore*, as this αἰών has a συντέλεια. There it will be seen what has been caught, what must be again *cast out* of the net, and just as little of the latter comes into the ἀγγεῖα as of the tares from the field into the barn.[1] The fishes in the parable are either eatable or not *fit for use* (which in general the word σαπρός also signifies), fishes which indeed might have made good food, but which unfortunately have died in the net, and, amid the swarm, have become *corrupt;* but the parable says nothing of this, in order to abide by the principal point. To this principal point belongs now only the third and last question which comes after the former questions, Whence? and Whither? namely, When will this be done? The answer was also given before: When the plants are *ripe*, *i.e.* here when the net is *full.* This means not merely when the πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν, which in its number is known only to God, has been brought in (Rom. xi. 25), when the foreordained number of the elect is complete, although this also lies in the background, as it is on account of the good that the net is drawn—but at the same time also: when the whole sea is fished out, when all that were swimming in it are in the net (Matth. xxiv. 14). As in the second parable the harvest was described only as future (it is by no means said: and the reapers came)—so now, on the contrary, the final decision appears as present, immediately follows.

Vers. 49, 50 contain again an *explanation* unasked, but they only repeat the foregoing vers. 41, 42, (might the disciples also in heart repeat ver. 43!), and bring the three last parables into one frame with the conclusion of the second. It is this: the gathering is done also by men, but the separation only by the hands of the *angels*, with whom we cannot again with *Zeller* join the reigning and judging saints. Already does this literal repetition (for in vers. 39 and 41 the angels of heaven are certainly meant) refute the strange idea of the excellent Olshausen,

[1] The ἀγγεῖα (not *the* vessel in the Sing. as Luther has it) certainly correspond in some measure to the barn in a foregoing parable, but we may infer to be from the plural that this feature is here less urged.

that the ἄγγελοι here are the messengers or ἀπόστολοι, because in the parable the fishers themselves perform the work. This, however, is still the question, for in the whole parable, just in order to keep this in the back-ground, neither the fishers nor the fishes are named, and it is expressed in the indefinite form; as at ver. 40 ὥσπερ συλλέγεται, so is it now with the whole story of the σαγήνῃ βληθείσῃ, as if it were equivalent to ὥσπερ βάλλεται, &c. The angels shall go forth from the throne and presence of God, and of the Son of Man, at his command and commission; they shall make a clean and true separation of the few righteous from the many wicked. What in the similitude was an emphatic ἔξω left indefinite, is in the explanation, again the fearful furnace with its wailing and gnashing of teeth; still, in order that the friendly promise (ver. 43) for those who have *ears to hear* may sound above this dreadful conclusion, there is already, in ver. 48, a gathering together of the good placed before that gathering together of the bad.

THE TREASURE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER.

(Matth. xiii. 51, 52).

"Parables are indeed pretty and ingenious things, but one must also *understand* them"—says the excellent *Wandsbecker*; therefore Christ asks at the conclusion, if they have understood him, as in Mark iv. 13, he referred to this at the beginning. This question was not for the people but for the disciples, that they might be thorough μαθητευθέντες. And Christ, who could not follow the Socratic method in revealing the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, must first teach the disciples also, ere he ask them such a question. Forget not ye under-masters to do the same, neither the teaching first nor the asking afterwards! Have ye understood *all* this,—the last through the interpretation that was given of the first,—what has not been explained, and about which you do not therefore ask me? (for in Mark iv. 34, πάντα is not meant literally of every single parable, but of the import of all, which they might perceive from the explanation of some). The good disciples, because they had really *understood something*, and because now these stories were not as at first en-

tirely unintelligible to them, answer in their naive simplicity: *Yea, Lord.* Christ receives this answer as true, for he who understands something is certainly in the right way. Luther: He praises them just as if they had understood, because at some future time they would understand. He deals with his disciples as with children, in the simplest earnestness and the most earnest simplicity, for he thinks of what they shall become by the Holy Ghost, and has patience with their folly or simplicity. He does not repel them from him as a proud master by saying: Ah, how can ye now already know and understand what the kingdom of heaven is, as my wisdom has spoken of it in these parables!

For their future office, in the discharge of which their "Yea, Lord," would come to be ever more true, He now says what follows. And so thoroughly has He got into the taste for parables, after the eternal wisdom has opened its mouth in him in this way, that this last word also takes the form of a parable, which Matth. ver. 53 therefore includes under the ἐτέλεσεν τὰς παραβολὰς ταύτας. Perhaps meanwhile the table was covered in the house, at least the θησαυρός of the householder here is the storeroom of the meats (Ps. cxliv. 13), and the whole is to be compared with chap. xxiv. 45. We might at first say: What condescension on the part of Christ thus to speak of himself as of *every* scribe! But this He does not properly do, for He himself is no γραμματεὺς μαθητευθείς, he speaks of his disciples' office in which they are to follow his, the master's, example just set before them. But He is certainly the *householder* who has *now* given out things new and old to the people, and the disciples the guests and the inmates of the house; still *every one* is *therefore* (διὰ τοῦτο after such an example) to be like this householder. When Christ says "*scribes*," He gives it to be understood, as we have seen, that these seven parables also were founded on the holy Scripture, were foreshadowed in it; then also He places such true scribes whom he forms and sends (chap. xxiii. 34), emphatically in opposition to the then false ones. Instructed or taught *for the kingdom of heaven*: This is the grand distinction, the fundamental idea of all true instruction and learning, upon which all true *understanding* depends. Instructed, namely, in a twofold sense, for himself and for others, that he may gain it himself

and spread it abroad in others. The importance of *αὐτοῦ* which is the main point of the sentiment, is not to be overlooked; out of *his* treasure, almost as at chap. xii. 35. For the treasure and provision of the wholesome doctrine must through experience have become my own, in the way spoken of in the fifth and sixth parables, the *θησαυρός* must be put into a *θησαυρός* if I am rightly and fruitfully to use it. Not from knowledge got by learning, not from books, not even from the Bible, that inexhaustible store-room of the chief householder, can one teach and preach as Christ here means, if the truth does not first go through one's own heart.

New and old—that is in the parable the produce of this year and of years far back (Song of Sol. vii. 13), for the nourishment and sustenance of the family, not (according to Neander, for example) jewels laid out to view, in which old or new does not signify so much; in the interpretation of the parable, however, it has indeed a manifold sense. The ground-idea is: according to the wants and taste of the guests, as it is good for them, or, by pleasant variety, agreeable to them. There is not to be a constant repetition, therefore, of the one old thing, that the people may not get disgusted;[1] therefore the *new* stands first. But neither is it to be always the new, or a new form for the Athenian itching ears, but as in the true wisdom for the kingdom of heaven all that is new really rests on what is old, the old therefore is not to be forgotten, even the first repentance-sermon and the truths of the catechism are ever again to be held forth! The old is ever to become new by new accessions to it, the new must confirm and recommend itself by leading back to the old. Further, by the new and old is meant—not precisely, as Luther everywhere and here also finds, gospel and law, for what is here spoken of is instruction into *the kingdom of heaven*—but the new word of the kingdom of heaven in the *fulfilment*, in convincing harmony with the old word of *prophecy* from the *Scripture*. By all means also the word of *Moses* as the old, but only in so far as it harmonises with the gospel, and essentially coheres with it. Further, because nature also, creation and history is a writing of God, nay,

[1] Hence Neander speaks (wrongly) of "agreeable variety" in the modern or ancient jewels that are displayed.

the original, first book of wisdom, to interpret whose letters, and to put them into words, Christ opens his mouth in the commentary upon it, which forms the other writing, one may understand also these old metaphors, and stories familiar to every one, of the seed, the tares, leaven, net—and that by these the new ideas, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven may be pleasingly taught. And whatever else he who will only diligently gather into his treasure, in order faithfully to bring forth from it, will find therein that which may be called new and old.[1] For the Master, at the conclusion of his discourse, will say to his disciples: Only use all this diligently for yourselves and others, gather assiduously in in order to render back again, so will you learn ever better to *understand* all this (ver. 12).

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND.

(Matth. xiv. 16—19; Mark vi. 31, 37—41; Luke ix. 13—16; John vi. 5, 10—12).

Although what is further narrated in chap. xiii. 54—58, is by no means the same incident as that recorded in Luke iv. 16—38, but a repeated visit to Nazareth at a later period, on the details and significance of which we should have much to say, if we had now to deal with the narratives, still the *words* of Christ (ver. 57) are only to be rightly interpreted in their original connection in Luke iv. 24. We therefore refer the consideration of them to that passage, and will now pass to what follows.

Jesus hears from the disciples of John who came to him, and whom the death of their own master now at length leads to the true Master, not merely the (already known to him? John v. 35) lamentable death of the Baptist, by the cruel act of King Herod, springing from his conceited weakness, but into which he was on this occasion driven against his will—he also hears from

[1] Only not (with Neander) the here mistakenly allowed, nay recommended, "formal accommodation," which makes use of ancient expressions, without taking them exactly in their entire truth, which speaks of the authors of books, according to ancient opinion, without confirming such opinion.

them what the same king had said concerning Him, Jesus, that He was, as many told him, John risen again from the dead, and that he would like much to see him! (Luke ix. 9). This wretched king, under whom the King of Israel lives and works as a subject, now first noticed by him, this man, whose inner life was burnt out, who was made up of contradictions, speaking of his kingdom like Ahasuerus, and yet the slave of his Jesabel, willingly hearing the prophet, and unwillingly killing him, who will be a Sadducee, and yet thinks of a resurrection, who has a superstitious fear of the Lord Jesus, and yet has a curiosity to see him, is anxious for this, and yet takes no step towards it—this Herod, Jesus, as by a fit judgment, avoids. Yet we read no word from his mouth concerning the person and conduct of his king." He went over the sea *κατ' ἰδίαν, i.e.* here (comp. ver. 23 and Luke ix. 18) without the people, but with his disciples, the apostles who had just returned from their mission. For, while the first obnoxious preacher of repentance dies, twelve new ones are risen up in his place, besides the one whom Herod now fears. Christ withdraws himself at the same time therefore on account of the information of the disciples, and we read in Mark vi. 31, the words of his mouth: *Come ye also apart into a desert place and rest a little!* For the press of the people going and coming was great, so that they could not get their repast taken; it was shortly before the passover, which feast Christ did not observe on this occasion after having performed his work and his testimony at the feast of Purim. He speaks not of his own but of the disciples' *rest;* because they were somewhat too full of all the things *that they had done and that they had taught*, he kindly leads them into the solitude where is the true *rest.* They are not to create such a sensation or make such a noise among the people on their return to them. Come *ye* also (*ὑμεῖς αὐτοί*) now into retirement, as I am wont to do and even now have need of it for myself; rest yourselves from your journey, because ye too have laboured! But when Christ permits or commands rest he yet significantly adds: *a little.* More is at present not yet granted them, unrest soon again sought out him and them. The crowds of people hasten on foot round the sea, and Jesus soon again goes forth from his solitude (*ἐξελθών* Matth. and Mark: not out of the ship but equivalent to *δεξάμενος αὐτούς*; Luke, in order to

receive them with a salutation), heals their sick, addresses to them again much instruction concerning the kingdom of God. For instead of displeasure at the disturbance, there is only compassion in His heart for the sheep without a shepherd. Yes, He is moved too even by the unintelligent zeal with which they run after him, and forget their food: they are not to suffer on this account, and He determines in the counsels of his wisdom now to give a sign which at the sametime lovingly interprets to the people that word in Matth vi. 33, and testifies of the bread of life, but which shadows forth something special for the disciples after their first official work. The evangelists together give us six words from the mouth of Jesus on the occasion of this miraculous meal, the true order of which will clearly evolve itself from a right understanding of the whole.

Evidently the *first*, in which Christ will signify to Philip alone *what he has already determined to do*, is denoted in John vi. 5 by the evangelist's words before and after, as the beginning which Jesus makes. *Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?* Here have *we* (in such things He is ever ready to speak thus) all at once again many guests; we ourselves have indeed got enough, as for this purpose, partly, we came hither; but *these* are hungry as I suppose, must still have a meal to-day, and in their zeal have thought nothing of this; it is fit therefore that *we* entertain them; what thinkest thou, beloved Philip? That this was the disciple who took charge of the food may rather be doubted, for Judas carried the bag and bought generally what was needed. (John xiii. 29). We will more correctly understand John's words concerning the πειράζειν by supposing that Philip, whom the faithful Master now singles out from the rest, needed the trying question owing to his own state of heart. (Comp. John xiv. 8). He understands not, however, the gentle reference, contained in this *Whence*, to the miraculous power of the heavenly Father, but adheres literally to the *buying*, to which belongs also the question, For *how much*? *Bread* for *these*, said Christ, when he lifted up his eyes on the πολὺς ὄχλος; and the disciple begins naively to *reckon*, and finds, on a hasty calculation, that a certain round sum (proverbial among the Jews; there can hardly have been so much in the Saviour's store) is yet far too little to satisfy such a multitude, so that *every one* at

least may have *a little!* After this conversation between the two, the same thought now occurs to the rest of the disciples, which must very naturally have suggested itself, and they come to Christ reminding him that he should now bring his instructions to a close, in order that the people might yet find something to eat. They considerately give beforehand two reasons (only one of which Luke places after the request, while he mentions the other himself): here in the desert there is nothing to be had, and it is now late.[1]

But Jesus spake to them all the *second* and now more open word, in which the *we* becomes a *ye*, and the buying becomes forthwith a *giving: They need not depart, give ye them to eat!* You propose their going away, as necessary, but they are with me, and I say to you now: Must everything go always by natural calculation? They are already tired enough, and must not give themselves more fatigue. If the disciples had at times fed one or two hungry guests from their stock of provisions—now they are to do the same with the thousands! This he said again to try them, whether they would not of themselves, especially after the great things which had just been done and told, hit upon the thing which he had determined to do. His striking word might have brought to their recollection that similar one of the prophet, 2 Kings iv. 42, 43; it is at least, on this account, as well as in accordance with the constant humility of Christ, that he speaks thus, and does not say: I will give to them! But they do not in this instance say: Lord, at thy word we will give them to eat! They perceive nothing, and answer as the servants of the Prophet did on that occasion; they bring forward (according to Mark) again the same reckoning, with the proverbial sum, which Philip had just made.[2] They are indeed very much to be excused, for it is truly human and not without a certain reason in God's ordinance, always to think and speak thus first of all; Moses, the man of God, once spoke not other-

[1] Matthew: the proper *time* is now past. Mark: Much of the day is already past, reckoning from the beginning of the day, therefore: high time. Luke: the day began to decline; for it was between the two evenings, Matth. vers. 15 and 23.

[2] We rather suppose this, than that the gospel which was compiled from the account of Peter contradicts that of John even in such a circumstance

wise before Jehovah (Num. xi. 21, 22). But here we may learn, at least, not to be too confident in our reckonings, so long as they are made for *plus* or *minus*, *without the host*. How many great counting houses and mercantile houses have forgotten in their books the column for the blessing or—the curse of God!

Before the answer of the disciples followed, Matth. ver. 17, Luke ver. 13 (Luke is at least literally accurate) we have, according to Mark's account,[1] a *third* word of Jesus to consider, viz. the intervening question proceeding from *him*, which very naturally connects itself with the reckoning just laid before him, as a reply to it: *How much bread have ye? Go and see!* I will divide and multiply differently from you. "We *have* not what thou tellest us to *give*, neither so much bread as will do for these nor so much money as will *buy* it even should we *go away* for that purpose"—so say you, but I say to you: Ye *have*, go away and only see *how much* it is, then will *I* take care that it be *enough*, and that every one gets not merely a little. Thus does Christ point to the present gifts of God which we have, in order to *bless* these; for the ordinary method must certainly be observed first, so that even miracles come only in this way. Where there is a door one does not break through the window, where there is still *something* present, nothing new is created. Now Andrew speaks in the name of all the disciples, who agree with him: Here is a lad who has five barley loaves (the smaller bread, hence Judges vii. 13), and two dried fishes,—that have we here or may momentarily have, but not more. Because, therefore, they cannot answer: We have *nothing*—Christ holds fast by what they have, and speaks *fourthly* (observe in this connection of the different accounts the ever-advancing gradation) the word of majesty, in which the transition is made to the miraculous power, and the increase is promised: *Bring it hither to me!* the five loaves and also the two little fishes; we will despise nothing that we have,—but bring it to *me!* Now, they observed him what he would do.

And he told the multitude to sit down; more exactly, according to Mark, he told the disciples to make the people do this; Luke and John give expressly as the *fifth* word of Christ: *Make*

[1] Among whose "intuitive delineations" we cannot be so bold as to put the *ipse fecit*.

the people sit down! Or, Let them sit down in rows *by fifties*. Thus exactly does Christ observe order in what he does, and here beautifully illustrates what is written in 1st Cor. xiv. 33, 40, as has been at all times noticed. The small stock of provision is brought before him, concerning which Andrew asked: What is this among so many? The multitudes arrange themselves in expectation of what is to come, probably not distinctly marking till the end of the meal, that here there was given a sign of miraculous power. On the rich green grass, which brings to mind the rich hand of God in the sustenance of the cattle, the separate rows of men, who are now also to find pasture, look like so many garden-beds.[1] They are not to mingle at pleasure with each other as at festivals of the people in the way of the world, but solemnly to sit as at the table of God in the kingdom of heaven. Then Christ took the five loaves and two fishes, looked up to heaven, pronounced the *blessing* over them (as Luke expresses it, blessed *them*, the loaves and fishes), and began now himself to break and to divide, that the disciples may do this further. He does not first command that the five and the two become five hundred and two hundred, to be taken openly by the multitudes; he conceals the miracle as much as he can, and no one sees rightly how it multiplies itself in his and the disciples' hands, any more than one sees the grass growing. Εὐχαριστήσας διέδωκε—writes John; if what follows were only a gloss, it is yet, according to the other evangelists, true: he himself breaks and distributes ever on without its coming to an end, and the disciples, who carried what they received through the ranks, perceive this. They know not themselves *how* it is so, but their faith grasps the *whence*. If, in the first ranks, they may have been still anxiously sparing, soon they gave to all as much as every one wished. For when God opens his rich hand he satisfies, according to, and with, His good pleasure, רָצוֹן Ps. cxlv. 16. The more of the life of faith and receptivity for the divine power of this feeding there was in the individual, so much the more easily satisfied would he be with a little; but those too who ate quite naturally were all filled.

[1] Mark thus pourtrays the whole scene; the numbers with him may be variously understood: Every two fifties opposite each other as a hundred, and so fifty times; or unequally at least fifty, at most a hundred together; or most simply, a hundred times fifty.

Here is set up the heavenly ladder of true "tradition," where "the blessing of the first hand runs through many hands, even to the end." The father gives the gift to the son, the son to his servants, from whose intermediate hands all people receive it (1 Cor. xi. 23). Here is apparent, also, the purport and significance of the sign for the apostles who had just returned, inasmuch as, while, so to speak, imprinting a seal upon their first mission at its close, it foreshadows their future official work. *Give ye* them to eat! You need only to *have* something for such giving, my blessing will multiply in your hands in the giving. Nay, we might well say, that Christ had done all this in reality, more for the sake of the *disciples* than of the people.

The words of the prayer of thanksgiving and blessing[1] are not given, for it was most probable that, with a simplicity sublime in its humility, Christ had just said the grace commonly used in Israel. But while the three evangelists merely narrate the lifting up of what remained over, John specifies still the *sixth* word of Christ: *Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost!* Quite as simple as unostentatiously natural, and yet as profoundly significant as all the former unsearchable words of His mouth from the first to the last.[2] Also in 2 Kings iv. 43, 44, *what is left over* (as at Ruth ii. 14) is a sure proof of there having been enough; it was not to be altogether consumed, for God's gift is never exhausted, there always remains something over. And, behold! there was more of what remained over than of the original stock. But it is not for a memorial alone that they are to gather it; chiefly rather, in order that the people may not foolishly take relics of it with them. *That nothing be lost* of the dear, precious gift of God—this Christ gives as the reason. Wonderful union of the divine riches with due activity on the part of man! Beautiful picture of the working power of God in nature, which is at once lavish and careful! But Christ teaches and recommends to us precisely here, not

[1] Which according to the Mischnah had only to be said by one even for the largest company.

[2] One might preach many discourses on *every* point elucidating the true meaning, as Zinzendorf (Pensylvan. Reden) has a rich and masterly sermon on the holy *order* of God, which we should imitate in all things.

merely that "gathering carefulness which keeps together at the right time, as belonging to the art of *well-doing*," he gives us a still deeper ground, inasmuch as this carefulness belongs in general to *doing justly*. *That nothing be lost!* This is the single decisive ground upon which rests our household faithfulness with God's gift, of which *we* cannot create the smallest crumb, which is to be regarded as valuable and holy—not fainthearted anxiety about the future, as if God's hand were shortened for us or others when our hand has not enough.

That God's hand has been rich and open in the hands of Jesus extended in miraculous blessing over the little, these men now at the end, when all were satisfied, have seen and experienced in this *sign* which Jesus performed. But, alas! in human fashion they see nothing more in it than the bread of which they had all eaten, and because it seems to them a very pleasant thing to have their table so easily covered, they will forcibly take to themselves this prophet who is indeed the Messiah, and at once proclaim Him King with rejoicing, a king who would be better to them than Herod! The third instance related by Matthew of Christ's being taken for what he was not,—the other two being at chap. xiii. 55, where the Nazarenes see in Him the "carpenter's son,"—and chap. xiv. 2, where by Herod He is mistaken for the Baptist risen from the dead. Christ, in compassionating love for the people, in faithful wisdom for the disciples and all future believers, performed this sign at the same time as a proof of what means were at His command, had He been a demagogue seeking adherents; while He takes care again that His disciples be not carried away by the error of the people, sends them forward to the ship, takes decided leave of the people against their will (though they presume not to contradict or resist Him), and again goes to the mountain of His former solitude, there to *pray* from late in the evening till far into the night.

CHRIST WALKING ON THE SEA.

(Matth. xiv. 27, 29, 31; Mark vi. 50; John vi. 20.)

Christ had commanded His disciples this time to cross over the sea *before him*, and had promised therefore to come after them

without telling them how. Did He intend to walk round the lake during the night, which scarcely any one did during the day if ships were to be had, or did he intend to follow them in the morning in another ship (after having withdrawn himself from the people)? Neither of these suppositions is very conceivable; so that for the following miracle it only remains to be supposed that he knew well himself what he would do. He would once more show to his disciples in all stillness, even although no storm had arisen, his power over nature and the creature, in virtue of which there were ways for him everywhere. They, however, had, late in the evening, now come (according to Mark, ver. 47) to or beyond the middle of the sea, from 20 to 25 stadia as John states, which was about three-fourths of the whole breadth (being altogether, according to Josephus, 40 stadia or a geographical mile), and when now the storm arose, they made, in spite of all their exertions, very little more way by the fourth watch of the night (three o'clock in the morning), the wind being directly contrary. And Christ not with them—this was worse than the former time, although their faith might instead have clung to his power and majesty so shortly before revealed to them. Then he *saw their distress* (Mark ver. 48) from the mountain of his prayer, even through the night and darkness, and came to help them; yet it seemed to them, on first seeing his figure, as if he would go past them, inasmuch as he went to the prow of the ship, or, which may also be concealed in this, that he acted here as in Luke xxiv. 28.

God the Lord, who spreadeth out the heaven, *walks upon the waves of the sea* in His creative power (Job ix. 8)—this is now truly represented in His Son, who also thus gathers the winds in His hands, and binds the waters in a garment of his majesty (Prov. xxx. 4). This is more than was done by Moses and Elias, for whom the depths must first be dried up. Not, however, in the exercise of Omnipotence, but in the higher nature of the ideal man, in the might of the spirit over matter, of pure and perfect faith to which everything must be subject, does Christ come forth from prayer to walk *upon the waters* (ὕδατα which beneath His tread cease to be κύματα). This inner life corresponding to that of his glorified state (analogous to Phil. iii. 11) breaks forth, according to his and his Father's counsel, in

this moment of special elevation, in a way which was not always possible for him who so often crossed that sea, because he had no reason to will such a manifestation. The disciples all see *Him* whom they so anxiously wished to have beside them, nay, who had promised to come after them, approach so near to the ship that he can directly speak with them and Peter with Him; His well-known form would, if they could see a man walking at all, be also distinguishable at this nearness, only that they are again perplexed by His going past them. *What is that?* they ask among themselves in terror, and the fear which now first breaks out in earnest, precisely when the helper comes, answers: It is an *apparition*, a φάντασμα—and when the terrifying word is spoken, they *cry out* for fear. Is it a welcome from the Scheol, to which they fancy they are now near? This it cannot be, for the thing upon the sea assuredly looks like the Lord; it is more likely, therefore, to occur to them, that their excited imagination now morbidly deceives them with the figure of Him who has been so much in their thoughts—if, indeed, they have any definite idea at all of this φάντασμα. The *fourth* mistaking of Christ by his own dear disciples,—prelude of the terror awakened in them by the sight of the risen Lord,—most characteristic contrast to his own tranquil power over the elements! Man, in his present state, in the fear and perplexity of spirit which may so easily overtake him, sees apparitions, takes even his Saviour as he draws nigh in divine power at first to be such; this, however, is always better than, in the opposite folly of boldness, to take a φάντασμα of his own thoughts as the Lord and Saviour—for where Jesus really is, He will with his friendly *it is I* dissipate the mist of fear in all who do not, in their pantheistic illusion which looks on the laws of nature as the living (rather dead) God, hold that no one *can* walk upon the waves of the world and of history, and that the Christ who appears to any one to do so, is only a phantom of his own creation!

Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid! John, because his thoughts are ever hastening to the ἐγώ εἰμι of Christ, passes over the *Be of good cheer* θαρσεῖτε, which in Matth. and Mark prepare the way for this comfort-bringing *I*. We recognize this word of kindness which he is ever so ready to address, which even yet from heaven, He delights to address to timid hearts. (Acts xxiii,

11). In order that the majesty and miraculous nearness of the *it is I* may not terrify them, he encloses it so to speak, on both sides by words of encouragement. *Fear not!* This is the word used by the graciously appearing Lord already in the Old Testament (as we have shown at p. 89 of the first volume on Luke v. 10), but now first in the mouth of the Son of Man has it the full power really to take away all fear. Thus did He come into the world with his miraculous manifestation: I am the helper. Happy he indeed who in the true faith of a disciple, although it may at first be yet weak, gets acquainted with the gracious Master, in order to be helped, so that then every new *it is I!* always more effectually dissipates anxious fears, until the gracious words are heard for the last time in the last fear of death, as in Rev. i. 17, 18. But how often when Christ comes to his disciples in extraordinary ways, when he draws near to them in the cross and in distress, and thus brings salvation and blessing to them is there a repetition of this *mistaking* of his well-known form!

A Philip or a Thomas among the disciples doubts perhaps for a moment or two longer, even after such words, whether it is really He. They must first have him beside them in the ship; a John has enough in the inwardly adoring, calmly expecting assurance, *It is the Lord!* But the forward Simon Peter, the easily and strongly excitable, will still further and after shrieking fear, momentarily display great faith, in token that he also is the Lord's Peter. Not as if in a yet hypothetical "If it be thou" he takes doubt along with him from the first, for then the first step would not have been taken. Oh no, the start is bold enough: Lord, if (*i.e.* because, there, as I see) *it be Thou*—on this firm ground and bottom, he proceeds in hasty boldness of faith to tread, and like his Lord, *upon the sea.* But wherefore *this* now? The other inference would alone have been natural and simple: Come then into the ship to us, and we shall all be saved! But in the questionable little word "me," always questionable when it too hastily replies to Christ's powerful *I*, ere it has been specially asked and called—lurks the secret flaw in the great faith, on account of which it must soon again become very little. Had Christ of himself called out: And thou Peter come out to me—he would certainly not have sunk. But because he will outrun the others in showing his faith, the real

Peter must show himself just as alas! he still is, and give a warning of the future denial of his Lord; falling back again as suddenly as he had raised himself. So far does Peter know, feel and acknowledge what is right that a κελεύειν on the part of Christ must precede his ἐλθεῖν, but he provokes this command, almost bidding himself do what it should have been left to Christ to command.

What does Christ do? With a wisdom at every moment which we cannot enough consider, which always does what is right everywhere, and in every occurrence reflects at once the holy prudence of his whole conduct, he replies by a single little word to the almost prolix address of the disciple. He does not refuse the truly needless request; and with that false mastership into which we under-masters are so apt to fall, repel the bold disciple: Wherefore this now? I come to you, I have nothing to do with thee in particular, I do not need thee here on the waters. Peter needs him and receives, in the granting of his request, the better lesson by experience. He grants him his will. But he does not assent to all the terms of the request as formally spoken by the too courageous disciple; He does not add, *upon the water*—not even *to me*,—as little does he say κελεύω—for in all this there would have lain the certain promise of a successful issue, which He neither can nor will give. He says merely, at the same time literally granting the desire of the disciple: *Come!* namely, as well and as far as thou canst, it will be seen whether *upon the water*, and *to me*. This is the divine manner of acting and of leading in such cases. Joab at length, with angry compliance and without love, gives to Ahimaaz who persists in asking, "Let me, I pray thee, run," the answer, *Run!* (2 Sam. xviii. 19—23). But Christ gives His word of permission in true love, which will not let the disciple sink, but will merely teach him by experience that to the best meant beginning of faith, if it has any self-conceit in it, the ὑπομονή will be wanting. He had not (as Roos here thinks) *a pleasure in this*, that Peter should inconsiderately beg so strange a command—but he willingly embraces the opportunity of giving this Peter a powerful lesson by actual experience—*in this*, indeed, Christ, as the truly good Master has always pleasure.

The bold disciple, having now gone from the ship upon the

water, walks one or two steps (not more, for Jesus was near), confidently towards Jesus—then he *sees*, looking away from Jesus (*wherefore* this?) the strong wind which a few moments before he did not see, and yet which had been always there; as out of fear into faith, so now again he quickly goes out of faith into his former fear. And because, of course, only the faith of the entire will can bear him upon the water, he begins to sink, his doubt now beginning to break out (καταποντίζεσθαι, as at chap. xviii. 6, expresses more than a mere sinking down of the feet), he must, as a *punishment* before all the other disciples, who are now at rest, once more *cry out* for fear, and instead of his former exclamation, must call out the true word befitting our weakness, which he had forgotten, and which none of us can so soon get beyond, least of all in the false steps of Peter: *Lord help me!* All the fisher's natural skill in swimming (John xxi. 7), is at this moment gone, for when one has once committed himself to the miraculous sphere of faith, the power, art, and prudence, of nature vanishes, one can make no combination of the two. He who comes to a stand-still in half-wrought miracles, has also, in the hapless miscarriage, forgotten and lost what he could otherwise do naturally. What occasion might there have been now again for Christ to address to the disciple a more sharply rebuking word of instruction: *See!* thou forward and presuming one, thus it fares with thee. I knew well that it would be so—or words to this effect! But when the thing itself speaks so powerfully, there is no need for Him to say anything more; His heart, too, has no delight in making the disciple's confusion more conspicuous by any words of His. No, He *helps* whenever the cry is addressed to Him, "*Help me*"—this is the one principal thing in His heart, in His words and conduct. Nor does He call out merely a second κελεύειν, so as to make His *power* appear great in contrast with the disciple's weakness: Walk again! Sink not! Hold! but He at once stretches forth His lovingly-inclined hand to the disciple near Him, sinking beside Him who stands, *lays hold* on him, so that thereby the faith returns and the sinking ceases, says nothing else, not more and not less than: *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Such words of Christ are unsearchable beyond all human thoughts. With all the defects in Peter's first faith, it was yet truly a great faith, the

faith that He who walks on the water can bid others also do the same. Nor can we properly at any time have too great faith in the presence of Christ—if, of course, it be unmixed with self-confidence and self-will. But the greater the faith gives itself out to be, so much the more foolish is then even the smallest *doubt*, which, therefore, Christ here calls as at chap. viii. 26, the being afraid. He might, indeed, have said here also to the sinking disciple: Wherefore didst thou fear? This would have been more humbling in opposition to the former courage of the disciple. But with this altogether kindly *word*, He will not shame him into conviction but encourage him; He discloses the innermost ground of returning fear as lying on the boundary of perfect faith. Not even until after He has laid hold of him and raised him up to himself, until he has purified, strengthened, and perfected the wavering faith of the disciple in his own faith,—the faith of the Master,—does He address to him the word which denotes the whole thing as now *past:* Wherefore *didst thou doubt? Wherefore*, indeed? Thou wouldst and couldst walk in thy will, didst even walk! Has, then, he who comes on the sea to me, to regard and to be afraid of the wind? Thus in the greatest kindness does he overlook all of evil or of sin that had mixed itself with the faith of the disciple, and most graciously repeats his rebuking word, *O thou of little faith?* O Lord, *thy* faith is perfect, thy *love* is perfect—we all add with shame, and presume not ever on our own authority to rebuke a Peter with *this* word, which the Master alone may and does say to all.

THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD AND THE STATUTES OF MEN. WHAT DEFILETH A MAN.

(Matth. xv. 3—20; Mark vii. 6—23).

Christ speaks freely and emphatically of the *commandment of God and the ordinances of men*, placing them in direct and sharp opposition. First of all, he speaks to the blind leaders of the blind, because they themselves by their forward questioning occasioned his doing so, and the people standing around may also

have heard: but he speaks also to the people to whom he calls in the ever-growing zeal of love and truth. He rebukes, or rather recompenses, the naively bold question, by immediately meeting it with another strongly accusing *question in return* (ver. 3), in which already the whole answer lies. *God's* commandment and doctrine goes first, it alone is valid! Human statute must be broken, when, and because, it breaks the word of God. This heavy charge He proves forthwith, illustrating it by a *capital example* taken from the midst of the existing system of lies (ver. 4—6), and then, faithful to his wonted manner, he seals his words and doctrine by a *prophetical word of Scripture* (vers. 7—9), which brings to bear on the particular example the most general rebuke, penetrating to the *root* of hypocrisy. First, there is the adduced proof, then the rebuke, and this is given humbly, not upon his own highest authority, but upon that of the word of God written before. He forthwith, however, again, as becomes him, carries forward the word of God in his own doctrine, and enunciates before all the people a *general principle* (ver. 11) penetrating still deeper into the thing, a principle which goes even further, already prophesying the abolition of the outward ordinances of the Old Testament, inasmuch as he rightly explains their true meaning. The disciples, too, still prejudiced in the same misunderstanding of the Old Testament statutes, out of which the Pharisaism that clung to them took its rise, understand neither this simple and clear principle which appears to them a "parable," nor the reckless zeal, as it seems to them, with which Christ has just spoken to the people against their leaders; they induce Him therefore to give further explanations by two questions. To the first: Whether he intends not at all to spare the Pharisees, but purposely to provoke them? he lets them know that *human statute is to be extirpated*, because it is false and pernicious! (ver. 13, 14). To the other question which follows this explanation: How, then, is the principle expressed at ver. 11 to be properly understood? it is meet that *before* giving the answer, He should rebuke *their want* of understanding (ver. 16). After the rebuke follows the doctrine (ver. 17—20), which, at the conclusion returns to the first occasion and beginning of the whole. Thus has Matthew, who in chap. xv.—xxi. represents

" the ever-growing conflict of Jesus with the authorities at Jerusalem," here again, as we have found to be his wont, concisely and with an eye to the main substance, given the import and progressive sequence of the connected words of Christ on this occasion; Mark, on the other hand, is more full in his account, inasmuch as he not only retains many sentences which Christ may also have spoken, along with what Matthew gives, but (as is especially evident at ver. 15) enlarges by way of explanation for his readers, precisely as at the beginning he gives detailed information respecting the Jewish ordinances. He is moreover not exact when, inverting the order, he gives in the outset the prophecy of Isaiah, and then the convincing example, thereby also quite losing the counter-question put by Christ at the beginning, which contained the immediate answer to the one addressed to him. Had we only Mark's account of our Lord's words on this occasion we should lose nothing indeed essentially belonging to the import,—this would rather be all the more clearly brought out; only the significantly measured form and sequence of His words would be lost. Provision has been made, however, by the mutually supplementary gospels that we lose nothing: Matthew preserves also the frame into which Mark's explanatory statements admirably dispose themselves. Thus does the inspiration of *the Scripture* as a whole confirm itself, while, in the particular writings of which it consists, scope is sometimes left for what is human; a principle which, in the four gospels, finds its highest confirmation.

If in Matthew it is by no means necessary to supply ἐλθόντες at οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων (he purposely omits this, in accordance with his general delineation which now begins, and in which the masters of Jerusalem are placed in opposition to Christ, as has been said above, thereby, as it were, giving a superscription to what follows)—yet it stands beside it in Mark. Were they then Scribes and Pharisees who were returning from the Passover (John vi. 4), and had perhaps been specially irritated against Jesus by what had taken place at the feast of Purim, according to John v.,—who lived elsewhere, and now, meeting him on their journey, make up to him? But then the designation οἱ ἀπὸ in Matthew would not properly be *correct;* yet we might suppose that they were really persons from the metropolis, the high

school of hypocrisy,[1] who appear here with special authority,[2] and who had perhaps purposely come after Christ to watch him and to call him to account. (Which latter Mark seems to indicate by *συνάγονται πρὸς αὐτόν*.) They boast proudly of their *παράδοσις τῶν πρεσβυτέρων* or *ἀρχαίων*, of the so-called oral law handed down from Moses (תורה שבעל פה), which they have invented, and which they hold so stedfastly against the Sadducees who reject it, that the mere text of the Bible is declared to have no validity at all without it; farther, of all that the *πρεσβύτεροι* by a like authority have added to it, so that no one on any account dare transgress it. "To study only the text is a waste of time—the written word is water, but the interpretation and that which is added to it is the wine—if the Scribes say the right is the left and the left the right, hear them"—these and such like sayings we read at present in the Jewish writings. Christ had already, in the Sermon on the Mount, openly opposed his *ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω* to the *ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις*, but the opposite of this is now again boldly laid down by his irritated opponents. Especially were the frequent and various washings (Mark vii. 3, 4) a principal part of their hypocritical ceremonial. R. Jose says in the Talmud: He who eats bread with unwashen hands—כאילו בא אל אשה זונה—is as bad as if he were to lie with a whore, and gives this as an interpretation of Prov. vi. 26. R. Akiba, who, when in prison, had once so little water given to him that there was not enough also for drinking, chose rather to die of thirst than to eat anything with unwashen hands! This later obstinacy shows, at least, how bad it must already have been in the time of Christ, and what strong grounds He, who was not wont readily to give offence, must have had for acting as he did, when he purposely did *not* wash his hands before the Pharisees. (Luke xi. 37, 38). The disciples, of course, followed the example of their Master, and the question with all its boldness only presumes to accuse these, although it is certainly meant to hit the Master of such disciples,

[1] Rabbi Nathan: If the hypocrites were to be divided into ten parts, nine would be found in Jerusalem and one in the rest of the world!

[2] Only not certainly as a deputed commission, as Lange thinks. In that case Christ would have answered the authorities with more respect.

who of course learn what they do from Him.[1] Observe also how the *Horrendum:* they wash not their hands! only follows as a proof of the general assertion before laid down in a general form, *they transgress the tradition of the elders.* An inference from one thing to all, and on this occasion not without justice, for these people know well what Christ in general thought of their παράδοσις.

Ver. 3. Christ had spoken as yet very gently in the Sermon on the Mount of the Scribes and Pharisees, and even further on, in the growing warmth of his public rebukes, only sparingly and moderately, as appears when we take a near view of the web of conscious hypocrisy and actual folly, avarice and ambition, veiled under the covering of what was holy, with which they, by their customs and ordinances, ensnared the poor people of Christ. He may certainly have oftener refuted their doctrine in particular instances than the evangelists were directed to record for the benefit of posterity: still we have reason for supposing that his special polemic against it, at all events on an average, bore the same relation to his teaching as a whole, as it is now represented in the gospels. The true reformer *preaches,* first of all, the truth positively, certainly at the same time from the first not shrinking from the open general antithesis:—Not as the Pharisees! in order that the truth may not suffer from a seemingly pusillanimous silence, or even from the artifices of a false accommodation. He wisely observes further, in his *conduct,* the limit between a yielding conformity to the more innocent customs, and a decided protest against such principal parts as are of essential significance for the system of lies which is to be combatted (although these, single and in themselves, might seem quite as harmless as the washing of hands in the present instance),—just as we find in the conduct of Christ. But then he waits for the attack, and when called out, he comes forth to victory in an attitude of severity. So it is with Christ here, in opposition to the Pharisees. They have attacked Him, through His disciples, with a side glance of cowardly malice; He himself opens out directly against them: Wherefore then do *ye* transgress? They have with much seeming

1 In the highest degree *ironical,* only still more severely denoting their presumption we might (with v. Gerlach) supplement the question thus: "If thou as a prophet, perhaps, art excepted,—wherefore dost thou teach others such transgression."

reverence pushed forward the tradition of the *ancients*, to which they were not at liberty to refuse obedience; He charges upon them also the keeping of even this as a continued παραδιδόναι; for the sakeof *your* tradition! They have spoken by a seemingly holy expression of *transgressing;* He shows them to whom this word, in its severest sense, properly applies. They have brought forward the tradition of the ancients as an inviolable whole, no part of which one may touch or break (as James ii. 10 says of the law); He puts over against this as a sufficient answer to it, τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ, the alone true, in all its particular commandments, one, and entire, *commandment of God!* This is the original command, before which no ordinance of the ancients has any force. The commandment of *God*, not Moses: thus, says Christ, with the strongest emphasis, beforehand, and again in what follows: *God* has commanded! (With which Mark, in his more enlarged account agrees, giving it thrice instead of twice (ver. 8, 9, 13), although in the particular example, ver., 10 he has it: *Moses* has said, in order thus to show how both are the same). We have here again another strong confirmation of the Old Testament from the mouth of Christ; a fundamental testimony to the great authoritative principle of all human teaching in relation to God's revelation, upon which alone every, not mere emptily protesting, reformation stands with positive right. The ordinance of man in general, and as such, already transgresses the commandment of God even when it would support and further it, for it is written: Ye shall add nothing to it and take nothing from it! Num. iv. 2, 12, 32. There is need for no *fence* around the law, as that must soon become only an obstructing barrier; only too soon and too easily, as all history shows, is the opposition between the divine and the human forgotten, and the sole authority of the former destroyed by placing it on a level with the latter, so that the adding to it is already itself actually a taking away from it. From these beginnings a farther advance is made to transgression and abrogation. Here, too, lie the principles of all true doctrine respecting the relation of tradition to the canon; here must a check be laid on the first root of the abuse, by an unconditional maintainance pure and free of the words, with which *no* word of man is to be confounded: *God* has commanded, *God* has said!

Ver. 4—6. The fifth commandment is (as at chap. xix. 19), particularly instanced as being most directly obvious to the conscience, and in so far a specially holy fundamental commandment (the first, in respect to the human life, Eph. vi. 2), which forms the connecting link between the first and second table, and in which are involved the germs of all fear of God and love of our neighbour, of all piety and morality in Church and State. He who touches it has assuredly committed an offence against the order and plan of God in its very kernel. It is, at the same time, a universal word which *God* speaks everywhere among the heathen more plainly than the rest of the ten words given from Sinai: Thou shalt honour father and mother! The other word which stands beside it, and which, by the *punishment of death* even for an offence against this commandment in words, very strongly confirms it,[1] is to be found not merely in Ex. xxi. 17 (with ver. 15), immediately after the giving of the law from Sinai, but is repeated in Num. xx. 9, again sounds its Amen for all the people among Ebal's curses, Deut. xxvii. 16, and Solomon, too, gives special emphasis to it, Prov. xx. 20, 30, 17. In opposition to this, now comes ὑμεῖς δὲ λέγετε: but you are bold enough to *teach*,—properly, only to *say*, inasmuch as this λέγετε designedly follows the strong word ἐνετείλατο. Care has been taken in the Jewish writings that we should well understand what is here meant, although Mark also gives no farther explanation. Δῶρον, as Matth. renders קָרְבָּן,[2] signifies in the first place a gift offered to God, then any gift, present, or dedication for the sanctuary or its servants; hence in Matth. xxvii. 6, the Temple-treasure also bears this name. Now the selfish-

[1] This citation by Christ is besides important in opposition to those who regard capital punishment as a measure disapproved of by the "mild" Jesus. "Precisely in it does Christ find the fitting expression of the holiness of God, and the entire severity of his will against the lax and arbitrary conduct of the hypocrites." (Evang. Kirchenztg 1848). Reasoning against capital punishments from the *Scripture* is in general a nonentity.

[2] Mark: κορβᾶν ὅ ἐστι δῶρον—just as Josephus (Arch. IV., 4, 4): δῶρον δὲ τοῦτο σημαίνει κατὰ Ἑλλήνων γλῶτταν. But whether in this simple δῶρον be expressed at the same time the oldest and most general ground-idea of all *offering* before *God* properly speaking (only gift, not atonement or substitution), we are inclined strongly to doubt in opposition to Rudelb. and Guer., Zeitschr. 1850, iii. 504.

ness of the Pharisees made out of this doctrine their statute, that this *Corban* must take precedence of every thing as being of the highest sacredness. There existed already a so-called נֶדֶר אִיסָר *votum interdicti*, by which any one might bind himself in reference to another not to accept this or that from him, and to give him nothing in return, and it was the usual and most emphatic form of such a pledge to say it shall rather be Corban, and thus to escape from every other obligation. It was a formula of swearing and cursing literally as it stands here: קרבן שאני נהנה לך, it is offered, whereby I might profit or serve thee! Comp. Matth. xxiii. 16, 19. Chiefly of children towards their parents do we find it frequently expressed in the Rabbins: Let what I shall gain be consecrated, so that my father may eat nothing of it, and the like. In the statute: By Corban is the man bound,—it was not merely implied that he was at liberty to do nothing contrary to it, even although it were the command of God; but even when what was refused and denied by this word was not actually offered as Corban, if the word had only been spoken hastily in the heat of the moment, it must yet stand inviolable.[1] How often may this Corban have been said, in anger and malice, or through the shameful selfishness of children, seeing that, even in Christendom, and to the present day, the sin of shunning the maintenance of parents still so often cries to heaven! It will from this be understood why Christ gives prominence to and connects with the foregoing *κακολογεῖν*, this case in which by one little word this wilfully daring statute overturns the holiest obligations of reverence and love among men. *Δῶρον*—without *ἔστω* or *ἐστί*—denotes the curse-formula as such; by its being directly spoken to the father or to the mother the worst example of it is represented, when the parents ask and the children refuse, although substantially it retains its truth even when not done precisely in this form. To honour father and mother is a commanded worship of God superior to all self-chosen forms of worship;[2] this honouring comprehends under it, of course, taking care

1 So much is true, but it is going too far to affirm that, according to the doctrine and practice, it was enough to say: Thou shalt have as little of it as if I were to offer it!

2 There is a Chinese saying: If a man show reverence for his father and mother in his house, why go farther to burn spices?

of and supporting, as a grateful requital (Sir. vii. 28), so that it is very unnecessary to show, as some have done, that τιμᾶν has also this signification (Sir. xxxviii. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 3, 17). What the children have belongs to the parents—so writes Philo on the *Decalogue*. Whoso withdraws anything from his father or his mother, and saith it is no sin, the same is a companion of the destroyer—thus has Solomon already almost prophesied for the future (Prov. xxviii. 24). Such Corban was an unjust possession, and an abomination (Sir. xxxiv. 18). If, according to Num. xxx. 4—6, the father could control the daughter of his house in every vow and bond, so that it should not be valid if he disallowed it, how much less ought so shameful a vow as this to have force.[1] But *ye teach*—thus must Christ rebuke them—that whoever has said Corban, the same needs *not* also to honour his father and his mother! The greater number, indeed, read as if there were a break in ver. 5, after which Christ himself speaks; this, however, sounds to us too harsh, although we might retain the καί as genuine. In this καὶ οὐ μὴ τιμήσῃ, which is evidently the apodosis wrongly supposed by some to be wanting: he needs not *also* (not even) to honour father and mother—the daring *counter-command* of men is brought forward in a sharply convictive form, so that by this is directly confirmed the stronger repetition of what is said at ver. 3: And thus ye have not only transgressed, but entirely weakened and *abolished* the command of God by your tradition. Mark, who has entirely omitted the self-evident apodosis ἐὰν εἴπῃ, brings out the inference thereby in a still stronger form: οὐκέτι ἀφίετε αὐτὸν οὐδὲν ποιῆσαι, you allow him no longer to do anything. He has already, at ver. 8, expressed the same antithesis by ἀφέντες and κρατεῖτε: You leave, dispense with, the command of God as a subordinate, less binding thing, in order to maintain only the παράδοσις of men; in like manner, at ver. 9 again with the repeated ironical καλῶς (which is at the sametime still to be understood as at ver. 6) ἀθετεῖτε ἵνα τηρήσητε. He specifies, moreover, at ver. 8 that Christ also expressly mentioned before, the βαπτισμοὺς

1 In general then the text here stands in opposition to all unjustifiable vows, inasmuch as we are only entitled to vow what it is in our power and right to perform. Luther used it in particular against even cloister-vows taken in opposition to the will of parents.

ξέστων καὶ ποτηρίων, and represents him as adding twice at ver. 8 and 13: *and many other such like things do ye.* Christ may indeed have expressed himself thus, inasmuch as he brought forward the Corban "as an example;" still Mark seems here, at the same time, to fall into an amplifying fulness of words, in order rightly to denote in his *own* manner the same contrast which Matth. with his conciseness represents still more sharply and truly.

Ver. 7—9. *Ye hypocrites!* who cover the grossest transgression of the law, with miserable, trifling, outward observances, with empty phrases, and yet must know what you persuade yourselves and others that you do not know! (Luke xi. 40.) Every ordinance of man which is contrary to the existing word of God is in its innermost origin and development truly hypocrisy, and can only consist with a general relation to God such as Christ now imputes to these hypocrites from the prophecy of Isaiah, thus sealing His own plain words of rebuke and reprimand with a prophetical testimony. Καλῶς προεφήτευσε περὶ ὑμῶν—this may certainly also mean: His words are quite applicable to you, are *true* (really and truly, is it not so? which καλῶς may also mean, Mark ver. 9) when spoken of you. Such accommodation is certainly also allowed and occurs here and there. But we must here contradict those who remark that Christ applies prophetical words merely to his own time, and hastily affirm that a prophet speaks only to his contemporaries. It may be thoroughly demonstrated that, even in by far the most of instances in which it appears to be so, there yet remains a προφητεύειν as regards the future for which the whole Scripture has been written aforetime; chiefly in the case before us did the Spirit in Isaiah mean more than the then existing people. But to demonstrate this fully would require a profound investigation into the whole subject of Isaiah the prophet, to whose prophecies (truly ill-used in the recent exegesis) the present writer has given the most careful study. It may be permitted, at least, to note the following.[1] In the entire section, Isa. xxiv.—xxxv. (under Hezekiah, when Israel goes down and Juda remains) a threatening and promise are three times set over against each other, and the prospect as regards the future opened up for the people: either as false-

[1] With which at least the Introduction, p. 70 to 72, in my interpretation of the *not-pseudo-Isaiah* may be compared.

Israel to be rejected and to fall in the judgment of Babylon, or as the true Israel of God to attain to the salvation of Zion. (As both were already at chap xii. 13 opposed to each other.) Of these three "layers" (as we are fond of designating the uniformly commencing sections of the prophetical discourse) the *middle* one embraces chap. xxviii—xxxii., in which this general view is specially amplified into a *doctrine*, and stronger prominence is given to that which forms the innermost ground-intuition of all the prophets, namely, that by purifying judgments the true Israel is to be separated from the false, is to be won and prepared (chap. xxvii. 6—13). Thus now does chap. xxviii. connect with the state of Israel and Judah under Hezekiah, but forthwith (for the prophetical address pulsates in such contrasts and combinations) chap. xxix. stretches far beyond, speaks of more than one future siege and dispersion (comp. ver. 3 with Luke xix. 43), comprehends (ver. 14) the wondrous dealings of God with this people on even to the still future removal of their blindness (ver. 18, 19), speaks therefore (ver. 9—14) by no means merely of the then existing state but of the *entire intermediate period* which now lies open to view in the present rabbinical Judaism (to which alone the whole delineation in its most literal sense applies), and which in the time of Christ must already in its first groundwork have manifested itself to him in the same character. Then follows chap. xxx.—xxxii., which, again returning to the contemporaries and connecting with their conduct, and yet reaching forward to all times, is an exhortation on this prophetical text: 'Yield yourselves to the guidance of God and go not in the ways of men! I the Lord am He who alone leadeth you to salvation!' Oh that we learned to read the prophets with such a profound and comprehensive glance as Christ read, understood, and explained them!

What Christ here adduces, is properly in the original text (although the Sept. only gives the לָבֵן after, not the יַעַן כִּי) a protasis, whose apodosis thereby brought to mind contains the threatening: "Therefore will I also proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a wonderful work, for the wisdom of their wise man shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid!" I will give them up to their blindness, so that out of Pharisaism shall at length grow the madness

of the Talmud. With all their other differences Matthew and Mark are entirely at one in the citation, with the exception of the immaterial transposition of the *οὗτος*, and the completeness of the first clause which is probably genuine in Matthew, and has fallen aside in Mark. (For we can neither dispense with the *ἐγγίζει* as the necessary antithesis to *πόρρω ἀπέχει*, nor with the *στόματι* as the point of connection for ver. 11 afterwards). *Mouth* and *heart* are divided, as Ez. xxxiii. 31, and "on the lips" is still more emphatic than "in the mouth." In the main substance (only that *τοῖς χείλεσί με τιμᾷ* is transposed for *ἐν τοῖς χείλεσιν αὐτῶν τιμῶσί με*, as also *διδασκαλίας*) the citation follows the text of the Sept., where וְתִרְאָתִי is read for וַתְּהִי. The sense remains the same. What the Hebrew says is properly: And their fear before Me, their whole religion and piety is a learned, outwardly imparted, commandment of men—the Greek gives prominence by the *μάτην* to the nothingness, the emptiness of such worship, and thus admirably corresponds to the *ἐντάλματα ἀνθρώπων*; comp. the same expression, Col. ii. 22. They are, as it were, not even worthy the name of *ἐντολαί*, at all events they are the commandments of *men*, for the מְקֻדָּשִׁים also, with all that they say and lay down, are nothing more. Human commandment and human doctrine never go farther indeed than the *hand* and *foot*, while God desires the heart of his people. If this be far from him, then must he also put his people from Him, so that rejecting them, He says: *This people*—no longer *my* people. (As Is. xxviii. 11, vi. 9, 10, viii. 6, 12, and so in many places).

Vers. 10, 11. Christ now, seeing that he has spoken of the corruption as proceeding from these incorrigible hypocrites, leaves the blind leaders (ver. 14), and calls the *people* openly to him, in order to give them a faithful earnest warning against such doctrine of men: *Hear and understand.*[1] In Mark, still more emphatically, *all* the people—hear me *all* of you and understand. In like manner afterwards once more: If any one has ears to hear, let him hear! In a strikingly compact antithesis and plain apophthegm, he embodies his important doctrine, which, with

[1] Euthymius: *ἐκείνους μὲν ἐπιστομίσας καὶ καταισχύνας ἀφῆκεν ὡς ἀνιάτους· τρέπει δὲ τὸν λόγον πρὸς τὸν ὄχλον ὡς ἀξιολογώτερον.*

deep-searching wisdom, is opposed to the lying and hypocritical work of outward ordinances, in order thus "to stamp it as the people's coin." What defiles the man, and what does not—namely, the man properly so-called, the inner man upon whom God looks—by this is already indicated what the explanation afterwards (ver. 18—20) brings into full light. When, however, Mark omits precisely the antithesis between going into and coming out of the mouth, although in this the point of the saying as a "parable" lies, and puts instead of this his ἔξωθεν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, as also the more forcible οὐ δύναται αὐτὸν κοινῶσαι—it is quite evident that this is an anticipation of the subsequent explanation, and hardly corresponds to the original form of the saying. Even in the explanation afterwards he does not mention the mouth, so that one might include under what he says, also the actions proceeding from the man, while yet Christ in the first place means only the *word* as the most immediate out-going of the heart. We see that Mark has less the gift of seizing and representing discourses, than of delineating narratives; still we see, at the same time, that notwithstanding, he was allowed to fall into no substantial error. What Christ means is also clear enough in his account. All that comes *from without* to the man, such as eating and drinking (and then, farther, eating with washen or unwashen hands, καὶ ἄλλα παρόμοια τοιαῦτα πολλά, comp. Rom. xiv. 17; Heb. xiii. 9)—is in itself an ἀδιάφορον, can neither defile nor *cleanse* in the true sense of the word. Even in the sacrament, eating and drinking is in itself nothing, with reference to which Origen found reason to apply the saying anew to the Christians. It is evident, moreover, that it is by no means therefore a matter of indifference what one eats and drinks, in so far as this, on the other hand, comes out of the heart and works in the heart; for even the first prohibition of God was a prohibition of meat, and in Luke xxi. 34 Christ warns his disciples against burdening the heart with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the apostle must needs earnestly point out to the Romans and Corinthians what it is to eat from faith and in love. When, in opposition to temperance societies, some have sought recently to justify the use of brandy as being something that only goes into the mouth, the argument has been well answered: See how impurely it soon again goes out by the mouth! All

this will afterwards appear more precisely in the explanation given by Christ.

Ver. 13, 14. When Christ came to the house (see Mark) the disciples ask him to give more particular account of what he had been saying. Their first scruple respecting the regardless manner in which Christ shamed and offended the Pharisees, as well as the answer which Christ made to it, is found only in *Matthew*, who is the more intelligible notwithstanding the greater conciseness of his account. It is very natural that, of the two questions which they have at heart, this is the first that breaks forth; for although (ver. 11) they had not quite understood what they had heard, yet its manifest contrariety to the Pharisaic doctrine was to them evident enough. How, now, if the people should appeal to this word of Christ against their masters? The thing appeared to them all the more perplexing the less that they had been accustomed hitherto to such warmth on the part of their Master; with an amiable boldness (for His humility had accustomed them so to speak with him) they ask Him whether He who, at other times, knows and well considers everything, has this time also known and considered what great offence His words must give to the Pharisees. Why didst Thou speak the word so publicly and openly at them? Answer: As by My acts, I protest against their ordinances, and ye with me, so did I also speak this now *in order to root out the ordinances of men!* Be not concerned in doing this, about giving offence to the seducers, there is a present necessity and duty—for such ordinances are *destructive*. Never more sharply than here has Christ expressed himself in favour of a regardless resoluteness as opposed to all *compromise*, which yields up anything of the salutary truth. Those, however, altogether mistake the meaning of His words who, in ver. 13, already understand the ἐκριζοῦσθαι of the destruction of the *persons*, referring to the parable of the field, as the rooting up which is here commanded must evidently be something different from that which is there forbidden. Bengel's remark is quite correct, that φυτόν is what has grown naturally, φυτεία what is planted and fostered by man. Consequently the *plants* not planted by the heavenly Father (in His vineyard, His people) are here, it is evident, precisely the ἐντάλματα ἀνθρώπων, ordinances, doctrines, regulations, which must be

cleared away again. (See, on the other hand, chap. xxiii. 2, 3, by way of supplement to what is here said). Not till ver. 14 is anything said of the destruction of men, and first: that this is the sad result of those ordinances, then consequently: that precisely for this reason the error is to be rooted up, so that the poor men may not fall by it into perdition. The seduced perishes with the seducer (Luke vi. 39)—unless the saving truth of God interpose. This, however, is done, and shall be done, irrespective of its being an offence to the seducers; it is a salutary offence when a halt is called to the blind on their way to the pit. Therefore let them go, do not mind them, be not concerned about their *being offended.* The reforming protest against human commandments has divine *right*, it is a holy *duty;* at the same time, there lies in ἐκριζωθήσεται the *promise* indicated, that a time will at length come when there will be an end to the reforming which at present ever continues to be necessary. Meanwhile, in patient hope and earnest zeal, every after-growth of human ordinance is to be resisted and abolished by the pure word, as much as it is possible to do so, although the men themselves, out of whose evil heart they proceed, are to be borne with, and may not be rooted out of the world, which is God's field. Blind leaders of the blind: thus has Christ already spoken in the Sermon on the Mount, and again he speaks similarly at Matth. xxiii. 16, 24; here, however, he at the same time alludes still to the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. xxix. 10—12, 18; ix. 16; iii. 12.

Ver. 16. Hereupon, Peter, in name of the rest of the disciples, brings forward the other question as to how this offensive discourse is properly to be understood, with respect to which they had only perceived that there lay beneath it much that was important, new, and as yet unheard of in Israel. The explanations of the parables in chap. xiii. have made it a pleasure to them to ask such questions, and therefore as affording, so to speak, a just ground for their request, they call the simple word in ver. 11 (for this is evidently meant, as the answer shows) also a *parable.* It was, properly speaking, scarcely so to be designated as the slightly interpretative form in which Mark gives it, and in which it at once becomes a most plain and direct address, shows; besides, the going into the mouth and coming out of the mouth was no figure if they had only recollected chap. xii. 34. Still, as the going

into the mouth plainly enough was to be understood of eating, *the coming out of the mouth*, which is directly opposed to it, may with their weakness of comprehension have led them astray; probably in addition to this the surprising contradiction to the *divine* laws respecting meats (as still later, Acts x. 14), may have awakened great doubt, so that they could not reconcile themselves to the discourse as a whole. Christ, however, who on this occasion, with justice, ver. 10, had expected even from the people an *understanding* of the main truth, which was so simple, first of all chides his disciples for their want of understanding, ere he gives the answer: *Are ye also yet* so very deficient in understanding? Ἀκμήν for κατ' ἀκμὴν scil. χρόνου, till this moment, as the directly following οὔπω corresponds. Are ye not yet able as my disciples at once to perceive what belongs to the man properly so called, the internal man? Are ye also yet so taken up with what is outward, so prejudiced in Pharisaic notions and offences, that you mistake for a parable this otherwise literally clear discourse, and rather seek something else beneath it than the truth lying openly on its surface?

Ver. 17, 18. Train of thought in the discourse on to the conclusion: *Meat* is morally indifferent, ver. 17, *words*, on the contrary, are important as coming out of the *heart*, ver. 18, *consequently* by nature evil and impure, ver. 19—upon which then, ver. 20, winding up the whole, returns to the first theme of the entire discourse. There is a decided difference between κοιλία and καρδία, for the belly with its meat belongs to what passes away of the present outward man (1 Cor. vi. 13), while the heart is the θησαυρός of the man, properly speaking, and his disposition of mind.[1] Compare also Col. ii. 16, 17, 22, in order to see that Christ here, while he rejects the commandments of men relating to the sphere of the outward and indifferent, at the same-time undeniably makes already in this general statement a prophetical allusion to the impending abrogation of the Levitical laws regarding meats, Acts x. 14, 15; 1 Tim. iv. 4. For it was in-

[1] Compare the passage in Philo:—στόματι, δι' οὗ γίνεται θνητῶν μέν, ὡς ἔφη Πλάτων, εἴσοδος, ἔξοδος δὲ ἀφθάρτων. Ἐπεισέρχεται μὲν γὰρ αὐτῷ σιτία καὶ ποτὰ, φθαρτοῦ σώματος φθαρταὶ τροφαί· λόγοι δὲ ἐξίασιν, ἀθανάτου ψυχῆς ἀθάνατοι νόμοι, δι' ὧν ὁ λογικὸς βίος κυβερνᾶται. De opif. mund. 1, 29.

deed necessary that such hints should already come from his lips, in order that what was afterwards so fitted to create surprise might rest upon his authority. And precisely because he will include this in his far-stretching glance does he adhere (which Mark has overlooked) throughout the whole discourse so specially to the *mouth*, the eating, not the hands and their washing. He will certainly, at the same time, say: The reason of the *divine* commandments hitherto, which relate to the mouth, lies not in the meats themselves; they in no wise mean the eating or not eating in itself, as the Pharisees take them, and in their own fashion multiply them, but obedience. Every thing clean and unclean,—where God has hitherto declared any thing to be unclean (or likewise ordained washings)—belongs to the *heart*, so that in those cases the eating or not eating already previously *comes out of the heart*, just as was the case in the forbidden fruit of Paradise. In saying this Christ speaks without false affectation, and with holy dignity, of every thing human, even of the ἀφεδρών—partly on account of the obtuseness of his disciples on this occasion (as if He said to them, thus must I speak out to you in a downright way, in order that you may understand), partly, in the exalted point of view according to which, even in this Old Testament, laws were given for the impurities of men, in their present state unfortunately burdened with such. (Deut xxiii. 12—14). Profoundly significant is the certainly genuine additional clauses of Mark, who here also supplements what is said by Matt.: καθαρίζον πάντα τὰ βρώματα. The participle at which ὅ ἐστι is to be supplied, applies to the whole clause: which process, which business of separation at the end (*not* the previous washing) purges all meats, *i.e.*, removes from the *meat* properly so-called, that which, in a certain sense certainly, is impure in it, and thus renders satisfaction to the thing. As, first of all in a physical, so then in a higher sense, compensation is made by evacuation for what, speaking generally, is impure for the man in the whole business of meats. That of which Christ here so significantly speaks was for him, therefore, even a humble work of *purification* for the βρώματα, in the enjoyment of which and their passage through the flesh he was made like to us.[1]

[1] A later Jewish statute prescribes that a man should go to stool, and if possible empty himself out ere he sit down to meat, in order that he

All, therefore, that enters into the mouth goes in the natural way to be purged, and does not really defile the man with abiding impurity. But does *all*, too, that comes out of the mouth and heart *defile* him? It is true that (in Matt. and Mark), πᾶν is not repeated here, yet the τὰ δὲ ἐκπορευόμενα, τὸ ἐκπορευόμενον, are put quite as generally. Nor does Christ say, by way of limiting these expressions: But whatsoever *evil, impure*, thing comes out. He means, therefore, truly all that the naturally corrupt heart of man brings forth, He takes the natural man as he is, as entirely impure, and from himself, ever defiling himself anew; it is precisely this that with great severity He opposes to Pharisaism! The τὸν ἄνθρωπον which occurs twice in ver. 11, and now recurs in the explanation (Mark has it emphatically still oftener), is the culminating point of the whole discourse, which rises from the *belly* to the *heart*, and thus to the *man*, properly speaking. That which goes on in the belly belongs not to the man in the sense in which Christ here uses the word. Therefore Mark more fully: That which from without comes into the man (*i.e.* in the common use of the term and to appearance) *cannot* defile him; *for* it goes *not* into his heart (properly his *inner part*) but into the belly, and continues, therefore, also in the εἰσπορεύεσθαι, to be yet properly ἔξωθεν. To which ἔξωθεν an ἔσωθεν is then twice sharply opposed. That which the tongue from natural, unrestrained impulse speaks is only evil and poison from the hell of the heart; that which the man lets it out is partly a manifestation of the impurity of his innermost being which is already there, partly a fault, inasmuch as he, every time reacting upon himself, further stains himself with his own filth. (Jam. iii. 6, 8). From this we will understand the sharp concluding words in their striking generality.

Ver. 19, 20. A *dictum probans* for original sin, as strong as

may eat with *clean* stomach and belly; which the very wise Rabbins find in the "putting away of the old before the new." Lev. xxvi. 10. If this, perhaps, were said even at that time, we might find in it an occasion for Christ's discourse, which accounts for his going so far into the matter. For the rest we have here at the same time a testimony against that Gnostic doctrine for ex. of Valentinus which Clemens of Alexandria thus mentions: ἤσθιε καὶ ἔπιεν ἰδίως, οὐκ ἀποδιδοὺς τὰ βρώματα. So great was the power of the ἐγκράτεια of Christ: ὥστε καὶ μὴ φθαρῆναι τὴν τροφὴν ἐν αὐτῷ. (Cited by Dorner i. 457).

we could wish it to be. Ἐκ τῆς καδρίας—this means certainly *the man* here spoken of as he is in himself and everywhere; Mark has besides τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Ye are totally and entirely *unclean* in your *sins*, Christ will say; here eating or washing from without will afford no help, but there is needed an entirely different *cleansing* of the altogether perverted and corrupted heart. (Jer. xvii. 9.) This the wilfully blind Pharisee overlooks, and goes on defiling himself, while he foolishly holds with so much zeal his manifold distinctions of clean and unclean, Chap. xxiii. 24, 27. (Luke xi. 39, τὸ δὲ ἔσωθεν ὑμῶν, your own inward part, ye merely outwardly washed vessels!) Christ will certainly not thereby say that out of every man's heart and mouth only evil proceeds; but where good proceeds, there it has been previously implanted by grace, and comes therefore not properly from the man himself. He might also have said: Out of the heart proceed hypocritical words, when the people draw near to God with the mouth, ver. 8—but he has said this already, and He now rather discovers to the hypocrites what other sins in general, if not in works yet in equivalent *words*, are always flowing out of their heart. (Chap. xii. 34, 37). As a comprehensive generic idea stands first of all the broad and deep-reaching διαλογισμοὶ πονηροί." These are the innermost, first, heart-discourse and heart-thoughts, which in every word and work, were already there as properly the sin ere they represented themselves outwardly; in them precisely the ἐξέρχεσθαι of all sins from the heart is made convincingly manifest.[1] These are lusts and passions, doubts and contradictions, these are in particular, for example, such questions also as were before addressed to him ver. 2, and, on the whole, such elaborate systems of lies as do away with God's commandment; we cannot take the expression too generally in order to comprehend under it the catalogue of sins which follows. This, however, is in Matth. specialized only according to the decalogue, from which the concluding

[1] "The διαλογισμοὶ πονηροί, in relation to the following φόνοι, μοιχεῖαι, &c., are certainly not to be understood as a distinct species of sin beside the others, but as the *first step in the development* of sin, with which the others are then connected as the realisation of these in act." Jul. Müller, on Sin, vol. 1, p. 337. (For. Theol. Library).

and transition-command of the first table was adduced before; therefore the catalogue goes on from this point, and all the sins against the commandments of the second table are named in correct order. *Βλασφημίαι* are accordingly calumnies and insults against one's neighbour; the last commandment had already been included in the *διαλογισμούς*. This simple arrangement might occur to Matthew, who here abridges more and extracts the kernel, while in Mark we find a greater variety of species. And though he may have heaped together some expressions, yet the conclusion again speaks to us as genuine and original, and invented by no reporter. First of all, Mark also follows the order of the Sinaitic commandments (with the exception of that remarkable transposition of the seventh and the sixth which sometimes occurs): *μοιχεῖαι, πορνεῖαι—φόνοι—κλοπαί* and *πλεονεξίαι* are evidently to be taken together—now (instead of the literal *ψευδομαρτυρίαι* of Matth.) he has four other expressions which, however, by the following *βλασφημία* shew that they yet collectively belong to the ninth (Lutheran eighth) commandment. For by *πονηρίαι* side by side with *δόλος* are evidently meant wickednesses, malicious acts, injuring one's neighbour through falsehood (comp. Rom. i. 29)—*ἀσέλγεια*, in like manner, beside *ὀφθαλμὸς πονηρός* cannot fall back again into *μοιχεῖαι, πορνεῖαι*, but in its fundamental signification means *petulantia*, self-will, wantonness. As theft and covetousness, doing injury and guile, belong to each other as the more open and more concealed form of the same sin, so also does petulance bear the same relation to the עַיִן רַע of envy. All these are still included in a certain measure under the one commandment: Thou shalt not speak or be false against thy neighbour; they however penetrate so deeply into it as to reach beyond it to the *last* commandment, which is wanting in Matth. Finally, in the concluding words after *βλασφημία*, which are peculiar to Mark (the connecting link lying in the twofold sense of that expression, blasphemy against God and against our neighbour), a return is made in a most direct and profound manner to the general *ground* of all sin, as the first table discovers it in the first commandment: *pride* against the Highest is, as inward idolatry, the evil ground of all sin (Sir. x. 12, 13, in the Greek), while from this pride

flows all *ἀφροσύνη*, that is connected with sin. Thus does the conclusion here lead completely back to the beginning, and there is here attested by Christ, we think, a truth which cannot be too thoughtfully considered, namely, that all *want of understanding* in the blind, all *unreason* and folly on the part of those who are led captive by human madness in opposition to God's word, is a fault and a sin proceeding out of the evil ground of the proud heart. Which will be made manifest in the Sadducees and Hegelians of our own day before Christ's judgment, as it was then in the Pharisees.

THE CANAANITISH WOMAN.

(Matth. xv. 24, 26, 28. Mark vii. 27, 29.)

That Christ *departed* (Matth. *ἀνεχώρησεν*, Mark *ἀπῆλθεν*) refers evidently to the stir that had just been made and the offence that had been given, from which, according to his usual practice, he again withdraws himself. He does not, indeed betake himself beyond the boundary of Judea actually into the country of the heathen, for this, on account of what is said ver. 24 is not to be supposed,[1] but near to it, towards the confines, of the country of Tyre and Sidon.[2] From this time onwards we observe in the Gospels that he also more and more avoids publicity in Galilee, see especially Mark ix. 30 *παρεπορεύοντο*, which Grotius rightly interprets *παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἐπορεύοντο* they went by by-ways. The inhabitants of the sea-coast around Tyre and Sidon were called in the special sense Canaanites (Jud. i. 31, 32 ; Numb. xiii. 30 ; and, with a play upon the name, Is. xxiii. 8), or *Φοινίκες* (Ex. vi. 15 ; Jos. v. 1, LXX.), in which case the *Συροφοίνικες* and the *Λιβυφοίνικες* were distinguished, and when Mark at the same time designates the woman

[1] The visit to Phœnicia here mistakenly inserted, is therefore only a chimera of Sepp's, which we have already put aside.

[2] Matth. *εἰς τὰ μέρη* here equivalent to *versus regiones* as the Syriac expresses it, for Mark says *εἰς τὰ μεθόρια in confinia*, border, neighbourhood. Matth. says of the woman : *ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων ἐκείνων ἐξελθοῦσα*, Christ had, therefore, not come into her country.

in respect of her γένος by Ἑλληνίς, he only means by this in general, a heatheness, so that we cannot find with *Niemeyer* in her striking reply (ver. 27) a "fine Grecian wit." The beginning of the account, in Mark, makes it appear as if she had sought out Christ in His house, but the crying after Him (Matth. ver. 23) plainly shows, that she had already called to Him on the way. According to Mark iii. 8; Luke vi. 17, the fame of Christ's deeds was spread abroad also in this district; as soon therefore as this woman of great faith, who had a daughter possessed of a devil, had heard of the coming of the Great Helper, which could not be hid, she sought Him out (Mark ver. 55). She addresses Him not merely by the general title of honour *Κύριε*, but, in order that she may make no oversight, she adds also the Israelitish appellation, "Son of David."[1] She begs for *pity*, but He pities her not! The fountain of mercy, usually open to every hand that only touches the hem of His garment, flows not, the much lauded physician and helper will not heal and help, the friendly mouth, which is ever so ready to give comfort, is silent. He answered her not a word—not a word either, however, of refusal: I will not, dare not, help you, be gone and leave me or the like—to say this is to Him impossible, for it becomes hard enough for Him to be silent. The disciples cannot understand their Master; it has been so much His practice to *dismiss* all suppliants by hearing and helping them, that this has become the understood rule of his conduct. Ἀπόλυσον αὐτήν, *i.e.*, not certainly: Put her away at least, if thou wilt not help her, but includes the helping as presupposed. Still, their request on her behalf springs not purely from sympathising love, but here is a seeming against a seeming: the compassionate master *seems* harsh, while the disciples *seem* more compassionate than He, when they are thinking at least quite as much of themselves as of the suppliant and her distress. For although the reason they give for their request is intended at the same time to mean as regards Christ: The people hear it, and now there will arise a real stir which yet thou art anxious to avoid—still the most

[1] Which use of the Jewish designation presents no difficulty whatever, so that we are not under the necessity to suppose with Lange (after Sepp), that the daughter who was possessed had revealed to her the name Jesus and the title Son of David.

important reason to them betrays itself in the very bold "us:" the Canaanitess is disagreeable to us, and troublesome with her crying. Hence they do not express themselves in the manner most natural to the awakened feeling of love: Help her, hear her (do take pity on her! would certainly not have been proper) —but, *Send her away!* Pray, make haste, and rid *us* of her and her crying! A truly injurious supposition on their part that such a reason should move Christ to help her, as it did them.

The remarkable answer of Christ opens up to them an entirely different point of view, in which He kindly passes over everything in the way of rebuke, actually defends Himself humbly against what they had stumbled at in His conduct, and *adduces a weighty reason* for His surprising silence. The most of practical commentators and preachers fall here into the error which has become traditional, namely, that Christ, thoroughly knowing the woman's heart, had from the first determined to help her, but first of all, to draw out her great exemplary faith by a feigned refusal in the way of trial.[1] Thus is the pre-determined counsel of God improperly confounded with the human acting and consciousness of Jesus, which by no means is at all times, and entirely to be merged in the former; thus, beyond the regard to that which happens to the woman certainly as an example for us, the innermost significance of history for Christ's own person, the wonderful conterminous meeting of the divine and the human in him, upon which, in the passage before us, much light is thrown, is not at all understood; thus there is entirely overlooked a circumstance that lies quite on the surface, namely, that Christ, when he first breaks silence, says what we read (Matt. ver. 24) actually *to the disciples*, as necessary information for them, and by no means merely that the woman may thereby hear it *obliquely*. This is, consequently, the the real key-word to the enigma of His seemingly harsh silence (which Mark surprisingly enough passes over, while it belongs essentially to the gospel of *Matthew*), this is indeed a truth

[1] Even Bengel incomprehensibly thinks, that Jesus, in the exercise of his foreknowledge, made this entire journey to the borders on this woman's account.

which we are not at liberty to explain away as if the words were not spoken in earnest.

I am "*sent*,"—in this expression (as he elsewhere says also, I am *come*, and that sixteen times, but on the other hand he speaks only four times in the three first gospels, and forty times in the fourth, of his sending and "Him who hath sent him," comp. John vii. 28 and the context)—in this expression he represents his whole earthly life and labours as subject to the Father's commission and appointment. In this commission is exactly prescribed what he is to do (Luke iv. 43), and besides obedience to this he does nothing. Now, as the *sent* prophet, miracle-worker, and Messiah, he was, on account of the promises, actually a servant of the circumcision (Rom. xv. 8); not until his exaltation was the salvation to be extended also to the Gentiles. John xii. 32. He was, therefore, bound by his instructions, as He here not less clearly than humbly says to His disciples. *He actually thought*, in his silence toward the first and only suppliant from the heathen world, properly speaking, (for such is this woman in the gospels): I dare not help her! Else he had been quite as prepared to answer her prayer as he was that of the centurion of Capernaum, the friend of the Jews. He will not, by passing over to a foreign sphere, draw to himself many needy Gentiles by giving help to one, and thus opening up a new theatre of action which is yet closed to him, give offence to the Jews as if he were not their "Son of David." It was not merely fit (as Bengel, on the other side, observes half correctly), that he should lay down, by way of testimony (before giving the help which he had determined to give), such a protestation against further consequences, but the protestation is meant in literal and entire earnest just as it stands. "The keen-scenting, timorous, light-hating sagacity of the watchmen on Zion, the close suffocating air" (to speak with the poet Lange), has driven him, if not over, at least on to the boundary of the Holy Land; yet He speaks of that wicked Israel, whom he has to rebuke and from whom he has to withdraw himself, here as always, outwardly with the honour and dignity becoming Him on account of His calling (for ex. John iv. 22). For it is, and continues to be, *the house of Israel* to the lost sheep of which alone He is sent, in the first place, during His life upon earth. He has not now left them in order to give

them up, and turn without distinction to the Gentiles before the time; He himself, in faithful obedience to the Father's commission as a whole, does not now at once perceive that the Father has yet brought to him here an exception to the rule—until he comes to see it in the victorious faith of the woman, as he often times learned his Father's will, as regards the particular case, by what happened to him. Only thus we believe is the full justice of an unprejudiced interpretation, (without bringing it into what is not there) granted to this earnest and most significant word of Christ's mouth, and to the entire narrative in which it stands. It is *a heatheness* who now, contrary to time and order, desires help of the *Messiah—this* the disciples had forgotten, but He knew what significance belongs to this, and maintains the great distinction, when it is proper to do so, as firmly against the inconsiderateness of men, as, on the other hand, he can humble Jewish pride, and prophesy of the *future* salvation of the Gentiles who accept its offered blessings.

She has heard this,—the poor heathen mother who feels the plague of her little daughter as her own, and asks compassion and help for herself in the healing of her child; but she does not let herself be led astray, she reasons not thus:—It is then not true what I have heard of his readiness to help *all*, He is indeed the Messiah of the Jews who has no compassion for us heathen! Either Christ now at least stood still, when he spake to his disciples, or she forces her way through to Him, falling at his feet and ceasing not to cry: *Lord, help me?* No longer, "Son of David"—for this as she has perceived belongs only to the house of Israel, but she still repeats: *Lord,* mighty, universal Lord, I leave thee not, *help me!* The most condensed possible form of expression wrung from the anguish of her heart; nor does she any longer say, *Have mercy on me!* but what at bottom is still stronger than this. Will Christ now help? Not yet! She first receives directly the same information as the disciples, and that expressed still more strongly, in which Christ rises from mere silence to the worst appearance of excessive harshness—and yet there is no express refusal. It avails not that thou callest me Son of David, thou art a heatheness. Christ here adopts the language of the Jews, who called the Gentiles *dogs.* Those who before were the lost *sheep*, to whom the shepherd be-

longs, are now the *children*—namely, of the *house* of Israel, the family of God, and what He now is, or can give, is the *children's bread.* Already, however (alluding to further perseverance), there lies beneath the seeming harshness the utmost *kindness:* these unbelieving Jews, who have even now almost driven me from their country, are yet the *children!* *Οὐκ ἔστι καλόν*, it is not right, not proper, cannot be desired, that one *take* the children's bread arbitrarily, contrary to the order of the house, and *cast* it to dogs! The *Berlenburger* Bible extends not amiss: I dare not—"*else might the Jews say*," It is not right. In their right and name, indeed, Christ here speaks; yet His kindness, which cannot deny itself, softening still further the severity of his words, says, *little dogs*—in which diminutive the idea of impurity (chap. vii. 6), gives place to that of dependence, of clinging to (as now the women does), of belonging to men and the family.[1] The words "sound like, No! they do not however say No, but waver and hang in suspense" (Heinr. Müller)—only must every claim preferred in the impetuosity of the prayer be broken, and every *right*, even were it only that of the Jews to the fulfilment of the promise, be taken away from this *heathen* woman. In this *οὐκ ἔστι καλόν* and *κυναρίοις*, the compassionate heart of Christ already moves towards the *presentiment*, that it is the Father's will to make here an *exception*, anticipatory of his *mercy* (Rom. xv. 9). According to Mark, He said before this: Let the children *first* be filled—in which *πρῶτον* there lies the idea: It is not yet *time* for the Gentiles. This gives another spark of hope to the suppliant; it is at the same time a prophecy of the Spirit from the mouth of Christ, which might suggest to us the thought:—Ah! they are unhappily too *full*, seeing they have put the bread of God away from them, and driven it out to the dogs!

The same spirit which bids Christ speak thus and not otherwise, now teaches the heathen woman to advance farther, and to seize hold of the handle which has been held out to her in this harsh word. Well might she afterwards her whole life long be astonished almost, at the bold, ingenious, pressing answer which the spirit of grace and supplication instantly suggested to her;

[1] In which feeling Luther also has put "little dog" for the expression, in Tob. vi. 1.

for this spirit works everywhere in such moments of anguish, when a human soul struggling for the help of *God* (and that this was the case here is evident in the *κύριε*) becomes wise and ingenious to lay hold on the smallest catch of the finger. There is in the word of the woman, along with the *ἀνθρώπινον* also a *θεῖον*, in virtue of which it was worthy of occupying a place in the Holy Scripture of the New Testament, as a pattern of wrestling prayer, the most perfect unity of humility, which bears all denial or chiding, and trust, which is yet never given up. She cleaves to the friendly word, "little dogs," in which Christ has betrayed his heart to her—"she catches him in his own words" (Luther)—"takes the sword out of his hand and slays him with it" (Heinr. Müller)—"drives back the arrow into his heart" (Rieger). *Yes, Lord!* thus speaks humility; pride would say: No, I am not a dog, I will not be cast out among them! No! pride says in many even till this day; but "No, *Lord?*" too, when the Lord accuses, rejects all claim, shuts thee out as unclean from the family rights of the heavenly Father's dear children? Oh, that *then* at least, all might surrender themselves with the all-conceding acknowledgment: *Yes, Lord!* Oh, that we might learn from this woman at all times to *connect* with this, as closely the powerful importunate "yet." In the connecting together of these two words is involved the whole order of salvation and prayer. Such faith finds the promise in the very refusal, makes the unworthiness, precisely as neediness, the plea for favour. The dogs—hast thou said? *Well, then,*[2] the dogs are and remain *beneath the table* when they are hungry, and do not let this little place in the house be taken from them. When the children break their bread (Mark has now *παιδία* for *τέκνα*) when from *their master's* table *ψιχία* fall (double diminutive: little

[1] For Ναί is here certainly not a continuation of the prayer, as many are for rendering it, thus destroying the most profound psychological truth.

[2] Thou sayest quite truly—but I interpret it differently precisely *for* me. That is properly *καὶ γαρ* in the original text, which is too fine to be translated. We are not at liberty (with v. Gerlach) merely to understand: Yes, Lord, *it is lawful*, for even the dogs, &c. Such a yes would be almost a bold *contradiction* of what Christ had said, instead of the humility which necessarily belongs to it. Luther has with delicate tact brought out the true sense here.

crumbs), there is then no need, properly speaking, for λαβεῖν καὶ βαλεῖν, which I am not asking, for the dogs are contented even with the smallest share, if only they do not starve with hunger! I am even now, O Lord, not far from the table; even now there falls for us Gentiles a crumb of bread from Israel's table, seeing that thou art on our boundary. The dogs eat; well, I too may eat,—it is done and there is no preventing it. Thus does the word of the woman outbid all refusal on the part of Christ, and to understand and feel this aright belongs to the right understanding of His *reply*, in which he acknowledges himself all at once *overcome*.

Mark expresses this reply more according to the sense: For *this saying* go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter! Thus has he also correctly rendered more in human style, as another would have spoken, the acknowledgment and granting of her request, the original expression for which was not present to his recollection; Matt., however, here also literally preserves the sacredly classical usage of Christ. Hitherto Christ had not accosted the woman, but in this address all is at once granted: *O woman!* Now, after the chiding she receives a commendation in requital: *Thy faith is great!* He does not find fault with her for holding on, for being so urgent, for crying after Him; He rather praises this, inasmuch as it proceeds from faith. The cry of the disciples for help, chap. viii. 25, proceeded from the weak faith of natural fear, the "help me" of this woman from great faith. He commends and rewards not the natural love which made the child's distress her own (have mercy on *me*, help *me*), for in this there was yet also the impulse of nature, not as in the case of the centurion's zeal on behalf of his servant. He specifies not the humility but the faith, for precisely in humility, in the full consciousness and acknowledgment of unworthiness and the absence of all right, is faith great; only where one desires and hopes for *grace*, is *faith*. This woman has wrestled more victoriously than Jacob, who stood upon the ground of a promise; her praying has become a *willing*, before which Christ's first humanly-formed will disappears, in order that what has now plainly become the will of the Father in her may be done. As Mark has begun his whole narrative with a *willing* on the part of Christ, *while yet he could not* (ver. 24), so what the woman

wills is now done, by a holy wonderful yielding, in the proper sense, on the part of Christ.[1] Now then, as thou wilt, not as I will, or would. *Such* faith has a claim and right which the son of the Father, even as David's son, may not resist. Let not this be explained away, let nothing Docetic be brought into Christ's first or last word, so that the kernel of the whole incident may remain untouched, the testimony given in the human life of the Son, to the unsearchably mysterious truth between God and man, that *faith* conquers, and everything yields to its will! This Christ says—and that he can and must say it, was probably to Himself here one of the most important and blessed *experiences.*

THE FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND.

(Matth. xv. 32, 34. Mark viii. 2, 3, 5.)

And they praised the God of *Israel.*[2] Thus writes Matth. ver. 31, not precisely because the people then also certainly so expressed themselves, but by way of contrast to the preceding incident. Jesus betakes Himself again to those to whom He is sent, He goes up to a hill on the Sea of Galilee, His wonted resort, and there almost inviting and waiting for the people, sits down. Already (according to Mark) He had healed the deaf and dumb person on the way; now, in conformity with the duties of His office, he heals without further ado all whom any one may but boldly and reverently cast at his feet. To what a pitch was it now come in something more than a year's time since his first signs, John ii. 11, 23, with the crowding, pressing, and forward claims of this *people*, as opposed to the enmity of their wicked

[1] Therefore, truly an "inconsistency"—as Hase heads the paragraph—but not "a beautiful weakness, the only one in his life."

[2] Which formal expression occurs from Ex. xxxii. 27; xxxiv. 23. (Jos. vii. 20; xiii. 14; 1 Kings i. 30), onwards through Psalms and prophets to Mal. ii. 16—which Sepp ought certainly to have known instead of inconsiderately observing on this passage in Matth.: There were therefore many *Gentiles* among those that were cured.

leaders. Scarcely a couple of years more of this (the enemies of the good Shepherd having tolerated Him thus long)—and they were again accustomed to the works of their God, as formerly they were in the wilderness,[1] they desired them as their right, and as the ordinary course of things (see shortly Mark ix. 22), and yet were as little saved from death by them, as their fathers were by the bread from heaven. This precisely is the folly of these sheep wandering in their sin: they know not their true malady, and seek not the true medicine and meat for eternal life. He had seriously told them this at the feeding of the multitudes on a former occasion; yet He begins now to perform his signs with patient testimony, to help and to feed at least their bodies, to show good to them as much as they desire and can receive it. It may be questioned whether as some have said, these present crowds of people who had continued with him three days were better, and were inclined more to the words of His mouth, than the works of His hand? There is otherwise no ground for such a supposition, and that they do not say in so many words: Spread again for us a table in the wilderness? (Ps. lxxviii. 18, 19) cannot be reckoned as a great commendation.

But the good Shepherd's heart cannot deny itself and cannot refrain; his emotion again breaks forth in the words: *Σπλαγχνίζομαι ἐπὶ τὸν ὄχλον.* As in Matth. xiv. 14; xx. 34; Mark i. 41; Luke vii. 13; this is always an expression and outgoing of that deep compassion, Matth. ix. 36, with which Christ, (as in former times the God of Israel, Jud. ii. 18; x. 16), stoops even to the bodily wants of the wretched, whether on a great or a small scale, because their great distress—that which is truly so—moves his heart. These words "I have compassion on the people" in the mouth and heart of Christ have called into existence all the institutions of philanthropy, unknown to heathenism, for all sorts of indigence and distress. They are hungry—this now with Christ takes precedence of every other purpose to withdraw himself more and more from this time forward, of all hesitation about raising again a stir such as he wished to avoid.

[1] These words of the people whether occurring here or elsewhere can for the present only signify: Our old God still lives, and turns again to his people; Comp. Luke vii. 16; i. 68; Matth. ix. 33.

That they have continued three days with Him (although in a very different sense from that continuing with Him of which we read in Luke xxii. 28), He kindly reckons to their praise, for there was indeed a spark of faith in this, in which He rejoiced. Only once to forget bread in their nearness to Him,—how much better than the character of so many at this day, who so often forget and forsake him in their anxiety about bread! The time comes for dismissing them to their homes, but he bethinks himself with accompanying love of the νήστεις on the way, how they might faint—he cannot reconcile himself to this, and therefore he must say: οὐ θέλω. According to Mark he added (entering into particulars) the words: For several of them are come from far! (Certainly ἥκουσι is not, as Luther understands it, a remark of the evangelists, but a continuation of the direct words of Christ; ἥκω is the pres. with perf. signification, *are* from far.) "Here tell me whether, if the people had sent a message to Christ to tell him of their necessity, they could have presented a stronger case for themselves than occurs to the mind of Christ himself? Ah, good Lord, have compassion on the poor people, only think that they have continued now three days with thee; that they have nothing to eat, for they are in the desert; if thou lettest them go away without having eaten, they must faint by the way; remember that several of them have come from far! See! he himself considers all this before any one tells it to him, and has already himself made just such a prayer as they might advance in their hearts, so as that no one could carry it so well in his heart. I already have compassion, he says, and have already considered everything."[1] He, however, takes the disciples into counsel with him as he often does in his kindness, and his whole address to them implies without its being expressed: What think ye, shall we not feed them again. The frequent remark that this time Christ begins, while, on the former occasion, the disciples had directed the attention of Christ to the thing, is founded on an oversight of what we read in John vi. 5, 6; so much only is true in this, that on this occasion he at once calls all his disciples together, and will thereby certainly bring to their

[1] Luther, Sermon for the 7 Trin. in the collection by Niethammer, where also he avoids and even corrects the error of his translation in Mark.

mind the thought of the five loaves among the five thousand. Matth. xvi. 9.

And now the same Matthew, whose profound clearness in rendering the discourses of Jesus we so much admire, informs us, not less faithfully than strikingly, of his own and his fellow-disciples' perplexity on this occasion, from which it at first appears as if they had actually forgotten entirely the former miracle of feeding the multitudes. Yet we would not express ourselves on this point quite so strongly as *Wizenmann*: "it is, moreover, if Matthew was fabricating the story, the most *awkward* thing conceivable that he should have let the disciples give this answer." Looking at this answer psychologically, it is rather so to be understood, as expressing neither an entire forgetting nor an entire believing, but just their natural wavering state of mind and position. So much they indeed take for granted, that *they* are to have something to do in the feeding of the people, because he has called them to him, and πόθεν ἡμῖν sounds almost like a delicate allusion to the former occasion—a shy question which they only reverently conceal: *Is it to be in the same way again?* (Mark, indeed, has instead δυνήσεταί τις, which sounds somewhat more indefinite.) It is certainly inconceivable that they should not at all have remembered the former miracle; but Christ had, on this occasion, allowed the third day to arrive before doing anything, and many a want he did not supply in this miraculous way; they venture, therefore, to think neither one thing nor another regarding his present intention, in their embarrassment they do not at the moment well know what they shall *say*, and in reality they just say what is most direct and straightforward. Perfectly *honest*, they will neither boldly advance with their half faith to a repetition of the miracle, nor will they oppose their half doubt to what Christ has said as a direct contradiction; they therefore recur rather to what they said on the former occasion: *Whence* should we have so much bread in the wilderness as to fill so great a multitude? (On this occasion the stronger expression χορτάσαι is used to correspond with the νήστεις). Christ at once receives this kindly, because there was in it at the same time something which recalled the procedure on the former occasion, and He therefore repeats now His former answer: *How much bread have ye?* (Mark vi. 38, viii. 5). This signified: *By*

all means in the same way again! Whether the power of God really will not or cannot[1] create anything new since the creation, without "materiam praejacentem"—into such subtle questions we do not enter. If aught stands written to this effect, then must we read it, and if it be at this day done before our eyes (who knows all that is done?)—then our wisdom would have an end, just as the present physiology of animal life in the presence of the toad living for centuries in the stone. Now it is here said that the disciples had a little bread and a few fishes; that Christ first of all asked after these, and took them, is natural. Let him who has any wish to enquire farther suppose the case: We have nothing at all! and whether Christ would then have said, Then must the poor people indeed faint? Or whether He might still have filled them with, or without meat, and done to them according to His compassion? Suffice to say, He took also *the fishes*, which the disciples before had called *little fishes*, and, according to Matthew, at least had not counted them, while according to Mark they had not even named them,—He *gives thanks* for every present gift of God, but His thanksgiving becomes a powerfully increasing blessing, when the people need and His *heart wills* it.

REFERENCE TO THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

(Matth. xvi. 2—4; Mar. viii. 12.)

Nothing more natural than that the demand for signs should be repeated; it may quite possibly have occurred several times besides those mentioned at chap. viii. 12, here, and at John vi. 30. Though not *so often* as certain standing objections and phrases are brought forward to preachers, missionaries, and Christians in general, according to the country and people; for the power of Christ to dismiss and deter from these was greater

[1] It is a question, whether among the κυλλοῖς (ver. 30) there were maimed persons to whom Christ supplied the members that were wanting? Of which for the rest Grotius says differently from Olshausen, Non video quid obstet.

than ours. Equally natural is it that he should repeat the same answer to the same challenge, especially as it was certainly only other persons who repeated the challenge, or rather brought it forward anew from the same disposition of mind. If this, then, was repeated once or twice, the striking answer of Christ would become commonly known in its general purport, and it would be said among His opponents: One must not come to Him with this demand, else one gets for answer, The wicked and adulterous generation, and the sign of Jonah.

As, after the first feeding of the multitudes, the obstinate people desire bread *from heaven*, so probably the demand of the Pharisees and Sadducees here stands in some connexion with the foregoing second feeding. They have heard of it, and (similarly as at chap. xii.) want to counteract the impression upon the people: "Who knows how this came to pass? Can He yet further, yet more conspicuously and surely, attest His power? We have asked this of Him in vain!" For, that He will at all events not do what they desire, so much do these hypocrites certainly know beforehand, although with no clear insight into the true reason of this. They say it indeed, *πειράζοντες αὐτόν*, as Mark adds. Still, there is mingled with this presentiment of the truth, and this malice which suppresses it, the actual folly of the Jewish opinion, according to which heavenly and earthly signs were at that time distinguished, and it was supposed that the latter might be wrought also by evil spirits (by Beelzebub). On the former occasion, therefore, when a sign was asked, it was a sign *from heaven* that was meant, as Luke says (chap. xi. 16). Matthew, however, here, for the first time, expressly specifies this. The idols of the heathen or the devils can shew no sign in the heavens—we read in the book of Baruch chap. vi. 66 (comp. iv. 7; 1 Cor. x. 30), and the later corrupt taste has invented enough of apocryphal *manifestations from heaven*. (2 Macc. ii. 22.) It is uncertain whether those who now make the demand are thinking of signs such as these, or of those that are canonical, of bread from heaven such as Moses gave, causing the sun to stand still as Joshua did, calling forth thunder and rain (Jer. xiv. 22) as Samuel and Elias, or something else; only they can hardly have had in their thoughts the

Messianic signs in the heaven (Joel iii. 3, which many commentators mention here.)[1] He has given them enough of Messiah-signs, and yet they will not receive him as the Messiah! Had he even done as many signs in the heaven as he did on earth, they would assuredly have impudently come forward still more with the objection: "What good is done to us by all these appearances and spectacles, which dazzle the mob, and which aërial spirits may produce for him by magic? Let him, instead of this, heal our sick, the lame, and the blind, as it is written in the prophets, that we may know that it is he!"[2]

According to Matth. ver. 4, Christ gave these knaves literally the same answer as at chap. xii. 39, where we have already explained it in its profound import. Mark ver. 12 only indicates the same by a general expression (*εἰ δοθήσεται*, formula of swearting Heb. אִם), but adds, after his manner, which oftener represents the thing by such delineations of feeling or gestures, that Christ *heaved a sigh* from the bottom of his heart *τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ*, which sigh finds also its expression in the words, either literally spoken, or to this effect:—*Why does this generation seek after a sign!* Whence and wherefore but from unbelief and hypocrisy, which repels from itself the evident miracles and clear proofs already afforded!

Matthew who, in giving the discourses of Christ, is always the most exact of the three first evangelists, as far as regards the inviolable kernel, informs us, however, that Christ here, as is always to be supposed in similar cases, by no means merely repeated the former answer, but put before it something new, which is again repeated in Luke xii. 54—57.[3]

You are generally wise enough to observe and discern in the sky *what sort of weather* is already present over the earth; if you would thus attentively look at the signs now present on the

[1] With least probability of all, the star of the Messiah according to Balaam's prophecy!

[2] Pfenninger's Jüdische Briefe v. 159.

[3] And that not without a difference: here to Pharisees and Sadducees, there to the entire people; here only of the aspect of the heavens for good or bad weather in general, there specially of particular weather-signs; there more closely pressing, it is of *this* time and the application to itself.

earth, they would be to you signs also from heaven. However general the manner in which Christ here speaks of the signs of the weather, what he says is yet strikingly and picturesquely carried out; for when Christ touches anything in nature he hits it exactly, when he says anything to men he takes close and pressing hold of them. The sky is red in the evening as also in the morning, and yet the evening and morning redness is not the same; moreover, it is not the clear evening, and the cloudy morning redness. The one prognosticates a pure atmosphere even for the following day, the other shews already the present *χειμών*, the violently overflowing or tempestuous rain, although it is as yet dry and calm. (*Εὐδία* and *χειμών* the most general antithesis of the daily weather.) The verbs ending in *άζειν*, the immediately repeated *πυῤῥάζει*, and the adding of *στυγνάζων* the second time—are, in the Greek, strongly and vividly picturesque. Such rednesses, otherwise similar, you know how to distinguish, and to observe the difference of that which has the *στυγνάζειν* along with it;[1] you speak as sure weather prophets, when you see these different prognostics with a wise, *Then*,—saying concisely with great certainty: A fine day! (is indicated for the *morrow* by this *evening*) to-day, rainy weather! Not even an *ἔσται* as in our own language. *Στυγνός* or *στυγανός* does not (as we find maintained by some on this passage) originally mean dark, but, in reality, *sad*, although already with reference to the outward appearance (hence *στυγνὸν ὄμμα*, hence (Mark x. 22) *στυγνάσας* as an indication of the inward *λυπούμενος*, see, however, also Ez. xxxii. 10, LXX.)—the expression corresponds with the utmost propriety to the following *πρόσωπον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*, which is not after the Hebr. פָּנִים to be taken for aspect in general, but: the sky looks sad or joyful, presents to us a *gloomy* or cheerful *face*. In this lively way does Christ, with the true human feeling to which he will here appeal, apprehend nature, so as in the *γινώσκετε διακρίνειν* to point to the eye so receptive and open for natural things. But now he puts *in opposition* to these signs of the weather,

1 Quod si et nigrae (nubes) rubentibus intervenerint, et pluvias. Plin. Hist. nat. xviii. 35. Christ is no stranger also to meteorology, and when he will speak of this he has well considered what is right in the ordinary sayings of men on this subject.

which the sky presents to us when we look at it, the *σημεῖα τῶν καιρῶν* which by right should stand *side by side* with them. Already the Syriac is wrong, when it renders this expression as if it meant the signs of *this time* (דזבנא הנא)—as at Luke 12, 56 Christ certainly said, *τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον*. This application, which is indeed meant, is for the present, in a more general idea, left to be made by themselves, while in the first place the beforementioned distinction of clear and gloomy days is compared to different *times*, and their conjunctures. There is no ground for supposing that *καιροί* stands here specially for the Messianic time, compare elsewhere Mark i. 15; Luke xix. 44. Christ rather means to say, that there are in general *signs of the times*, every time has its own, all *χρόνοι* (spaces of time, periods) have as *καιροί* an import, consisting of the events that happen and coincide, to which one can and ought to give heed, in order to understand what time precisely now it is. These signs of the times to the single eye, the upright heart, should at least be quite as evident as the signs of the weather in the sky (which, according to Gen. i. 14, are also connected with still other signs of the times). Nay, these signs, in the things that happen to nations and to man, *are* indeed, at the same time, in the most proper sense of the word signs *from heaven*, of the divine government and its counsel, for all who rightly consider what indications belong to earth, especially in the light of prophecy. Not as if Christ will here *merely* (although this also has its truth) put the unhappily so often lightly-esteemed and neglected observing of the time with natural wisdom, *in opposition* to the observing of the signs from heaven; rather are we admonished here to consider the time with the true, divinely-opened eye. Israel especially had, in addition to this, the *word of prophecy* given from heaven, in the light of which to prove and learn what God, from time to time, had caused to happen them; not otherwise did the prophets in earlier times come to know their times from the former word, and thus find and receive new disclosures for the present, and the remoter future. If this holds good in general, it must do so in the highest degree in regard to the time of times, the period of fulfilment and visitation in the most proper sense, in which everything now cried aloud: Who hath ears to hear let him hear! Who hath eyes to see let him see! To the Sadducees also, even without

prophecy, were manifest the *signs* of the time of the Messiah, which were now present in abundance. Let chap. xi. 4—15 be recalled; what was there said Christ means here, and still more, even in the widest sense. Not merely his miracles, his works, or his whole labours, after Elias cried in the wilderness,—but also that the sceptre had departed from Juda, that Daniel's year of weeks had come to an end, and what else such as were attentive might observe; even the wicked generation might be a sign to *itself*, were it only to judge rightly of itself.

But it *will* not do so, and, therefore, Christ rebukes it when it asks and requires signs; therefore, he asks, on the other hand: *Ye hypocrites* who know so well to *discern* the redness of the sky, *can* ye really not discern the signs of the times, not perceive the great significance of the present time which is full of signs, in contradistinction to all that have been before it? If ye only *would!* Here is a text for a sermon to the conscience, the truth of which continually more or less strongly renews itself, although it was only then true in the strongest sense. Thus are men *hypocrites*, in that though wise in natural things they show themselves and make themselves blind in spiritual, and like many even at this day "rather look to the weather and the barometer than into the Bible and their own heart." What is said of the weather is itself, at the same time, figurative, and to be further extended: in the political horizon they discern peace or war εἰδία or χειμών with cunning pragmatism as prophets of news, but as *prophets of the kingdom* to perceive God's work on the earth they are wilfully stupid, and yet, at the same time, act as if they really desired for themselves signs from heaven! Such a generation is still always, as it was then referred to the sign of Jonah which is now set up in all the world, to the sermon concerning the risen crucified one and its effect on the earth; this is the true sign from heaven. He who believes not this, how is he to be helped against his will?—and *he left them and departed!*

[1] For the ancient interpretation of these prophecies remains sure against all new ones.

BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN!

Matth. xvi. 6, 8, 11. Mark viii. 15, 17—21.

The *warning*[1] against the leaven of the *Pharisees and Sadducees*, which He now gives to His disciples on the way in the ship, stands in exact connexion, as we shall soon see, with the incident just narrated. *Leaven* is also among the heathen a metaphor for what is corrupt, bad, in so far as fermentation is taken as allied to putrefaction. In this signification the Israelites were forbidden to use it as a meat-offering (Lev. ii. 11; Amos iv. 5), as also its removal during the seven days of the passover (Ex. xii. 15, 19; xiii. 7) is, even in the New Testament applied as a figure by the Apostle, 1 Cor. v. 2. The Rabbins call the יֵצֶר הָרַע, or the natural sinful imaginations and aims of the heart שְׂאוֹר שֶׁבָּעִסָּה —the leaven in the dough, "because as a little leaven it leavens and corrupts the whole dough."[2] Accordingly in this warning

[1] Mark uses here the expression διεστέλλετο. This word elsewhere in Greek signifies originally to distinguish, then to say or appoint anything definitely and plainly, hence at Matth. xvi. 20, Hesych. explains by διεσαφήσατο. The LXX put it for הוֹרָה to impart light and instruction upon anything, then also specially to *warn*; hence in the New Testament διαστέλλειν is chiefly to *forbid*, (see Matth. xvi. 20; Mark v. 43; vii. 36; ix. 9). Elsewhere also, Heb. xii. 20 τὸ διαστελλόμενον, in general, that which was spoken to them—as Acts xv. 24, οἷς διεστειλάμεθα, we have *said expressly* or *laid down* nothing concerning this,—as distinguished from, *commanded*, properly speaking. Here, therefore, in Mark it means, to say openly to them, pointedly and earnestly *warning* them; with which the anxiously careful misunderstanding of the disciples is intended to stand in contrast. "What does he mean by this so pointed word?"

[2] This general reference is sufficient as a motive for the warning. Lange again certainly interprets too subtly when he thinks, that "with the feeling of one who was driven out"—as if he now "made his removal from the Jews who had become heathens," Christ with a typical retrospect warned them against taking along with them the leaven of the Egyptians. Although in other respects the idea appears quite ingenious: "that in the *removal* from an impure theoretical community they must have a higher care than the fear of being, in the first place, *without bread*, namely, the care lest they should *take along with them*, into the new order of things, any of the leaven of the same corrupt tendency of life deep into the secret recess of the heart."

Christ has certainly in his mind nothing merely outward, but, precisely as the Apostle in addressing the Corinthians, a *disposition*, a *state of mind*, which, deep-sinking and all-penetrating, either steals into the heart, or is already there; the διδαχή of Matthew therefore (ver. 12) either expresses the same thing regarded internally (as our *system*, equivalent also to principle), or perhaps (which at least may be possible) is intended delicately to hint, that the understanding of the disciples at that time had as yet not penetrated into the depths of the word, but still remained standing by the "doctrine" instead of the disposition of heart.[1]

In Luke xii. 1, where Christ *repeats* the same warning to his disciples before all the people, and names only the leaven of the *Pharisees*, He immediately adds to it the decisive explanation: *which is hypocrisy*. (Comp. on this before at chap. xi. 39—44). We will scarcely go wrong, if we lay this explanation at bottom here also, although at first it is only the Pharisees who are called hypocrites, and *here* very remarkably *the Sadducees also* are classed along with them. In Mark we read, instead of this, καὶ τῆς ζύμης Ἡρῴδου, which is substantially the same, only the Sadducees are denoted in that special point of view, in virtue of which the Pharisees themselves took them into fellowship to make common cause with them against Jesus. The *Herodians*, as they again appear in connexion with the Pharisees in Matt.

[1] At all events, as regards the *Herodians*, the *doctrine* taken exactly can no otherwise be suitable than when it is understood of the "bad *principles* which prevailed at the court of the king." (See Braune on the passage, who interprets it just as we do). In like manner, Neander well observes, that the "doctrine," properlys peaking, of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, outwardly signified, could not at all be thus connected as alike. It is only an odd use of Scripture springing from his own ideas, when, for example, *Nagel* (in the Lutherische Zeitschrift, 1847, 1. p. 22) cites in favour of his close pressing of the doctrine, that Christ (xvi. 12) did command them to beware of the leaven of *false doctrine*—just as if Matth. xvi. 12 were also the immediate word of Christ! Christ rather meant the "disposition, character, life" of the *hypocrites*, which, as at that time among the Pharisees, may exist along with strict orthodoxy; any other understanding of it would only be the recorded *misunderstanding* of the disciples. Here lies an important principal point for or against the new Lutherans, who are right indeed in rebuking the really false doctrine in the Herodiano-political or Sadduceo-heretical system, but along with this should not forget also the leaven in the Pharisaico-orthodox, in the proudly hypocritical separatism.

xxii. 16, and Mark iii. 6, were not exactly a special sect; nor, on the other hand, were all Sadducees precisely Herodians, but this name designates chiefly the political adherents of the Herodian dynasty who stuck to the Romans, their protectors, and in so far, therefore, both by their Sadducean theory, and by their practice and their treatment of the circumstances of the time, stood in the sharpest opposition to the orthodox Pharisees, who, from Israelitish pride, abhorred and keenly felt the heathen sovereignty. Not the less, on this account, were these enemies united at heart, when the object was to tempt and to assail Jesus, as they had just before, at ver. 1, appeared together making common cause. Perhaps the disciples, in their simplicity, had indignantly reprehended this mistaken demand of the *Pharisees and Sadducees*, which had been so sharply repelled by Christ; and Christ, wisely putting them to shame, checks their as yet unwarrantable judgment, and tells them that they were not yet so surely exalted above these people's state of mind, and had also reason still to *beware* of their leaven.

Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees:—thus Christ views as fundamentally one, two parties who, as regards the outward expression, seemed at that time, as at all times, to lie far separate from each other. The whole of Israel (not taking into account the few Essenes who stood almost out of Israel) was then divided into these two opposing parties, so that every one must needs belong either to the one or the other; either with the one going at all events as far as Zelotism, which would refuse to give tribute to Cæsar for God's sake, or with the other as far as an entire adherence to the political court-religion of the royal family, reigning by favour of the Romans. Jesus, however, will in his disciples form another and a new party, alike opposed to both, and yet not Essenian, but genuinely Israelitish in the fulfilment, in the kingdom of the Messiah now come. *Ye hypocrites!* Thus has He before rejected them both together; here, therefore, also He means, in the first place, the leaven of their hypocrisy. This, however, is not yet the deepest import of His words, in so far as He classes them both together. In the Pharisee, also, the secret Sadducee lies hid, beneath all the show of strict orthodoxy and zeal for the law; for they are *hypocrites*, because they are properly *unbelievers* in heart. The ground of

all hypocrisy is the putting aside and repelling of the certified truth; on the other hand, also, all open unbelief, Sadduceanism, Herodianism, is in substance still the same *hypocrisy*, only in an inverted form, in so far as the freethinker and politician carries his delusion *in like manner against conscience*, as the right truth and wisdom, only for show. It is a hiding in the one case and an uncovering in the other, but both equally false and human. While, therefore, when both are spoken of together as hypocrites, the honour of the "*a parte potiori fit denominatio*" falls to the Pharisee, and the Sadducee must *nolens volens* be contented to be reckoned in the same category—the Pharisee is, thereby, also *at the same time*, called a Sadducee, *i.e.*, the one as the other an unbeliever. This is the leaven of the *Pharisees and Sadducees*,—different in outward appearance and yet the same: the unbelieving hypocrisy and the hypocritical unbelief in its innermost oneness, such as it must betray itself in hostile fellowship against the truth of God in Christ. Let us now in the application pass beyond the limits of Israel, and see how this Israel itself, in its decline and corruption, cannot cease to be a world-historical type of man and of Christendom. Orthodoxy and rationalism, zeal for the letter and criticism, pietism and libertinism, Church zeal and political worldly-wisdom—also the "dry science without energy" (which Roos here mentions) and the energetic literature of unbelief and immorality—who can name and comprehend all the forms which, in theory and practice, on this side and on that, this twofold leaven has assumed, and even now assumes at this day? Thus it threatens the disciples of Christ everywhere, in public teaching, discourse or writing, in social life, finally (for otherwise there would be no danger!), in their own hearts, which readily sympathise with the subtilely scattered elements of falsehood, in the one form or the other, to the prejudice of the pure truth held in entire faith. Therefore what Christ here says to His disciples He says to all: *Take heed*, by looking around you! *Beware*, by looking within you!

The disciples were then far from such an understanding of the wise words of their Master, and thought He meant by the leaven only literal bread belonging to the Pharisees. So soon again had they forgotten what was said (chap. xv. 16—20)!

They had accidentally, on this occasion, not taken due care to provide themselves with bread according to their usual custom; Mark, who must have very direct information, says quite exactly, that only one loaf was in the ship.[1] This neglect, which now occurs to them, helps, moreover, to keep their thoughts fixed on the bread, as if the word of Christ were in some way connected with this. They said among themselves ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, *i.e.*, according to Mark πρὸς ἀλλήλους:—He will certainly mean that we have not taken bread with us. Strange enough, to bring this into connection with the warning against that leaven! Where, then, might they find a baker who was certainly neither a Pharisee nor Sadducee in any wise? And could it be such as this that the Master meant!

He rebukes their foolishly confused thoughts again, at first, with the friendly word which He is always so ready to speak, and which was indeed in a certain measure always appropriate: *O ye of little faith!* Here it applies first of all (recalling to their minds chap. vi. 30) to their needless concern that such a thing as a want of bread should happen to Him, that even He himself should be anxious about this; for it was this that had led to their confused thoughts. Then, however, Christ means in the thoughts of his wisdom precisely the leaven of *unbelief* of which he had spoken; for this, indeed, is already implied in every act of little faith, and then also occasions the hypocrisy of cleaving to what is *external*. By how much faith is still wanting to us, by so much are we also as yet incapable of grasping the whole truth, and walking in it; that which proceeds not from faith is error, and those who are held captive in error do not *perceive* also even what is most evident. According to Matt., Christ simply chid them with a οὔπω νοεῖτε at the beginning, and a πῶς οὐ νοεῖτε at the end; according to Mark, however, their want of understanding is brought into prominence in words of severer rebuke, in which *we*, at least, may be allowed to think it impossible that Mark here again "pleasantly and diffusely carries out the words of Christ." Truly there is nothing pleasant in the rebuke proceeding from impatient love which longed so much to

[1] The seven baskets full were certainly consumed, for the incidents are by no means so closely connected together.

have at length intelligent disciples; still less is there any diffuseness or tautology in these significantly measured expressions. If this evangelist knew so specially that the disciples had only one loaf, we may be sure also that the strikingly severe address of the Master is truly narrated from a good source, and we will find not that Mark has diffusely extended the words of Christ, but that Matthew again gives the extracted essence. The innermost ground of all folly, as of that now shown by the disciples, is the unfeeling heart hardened in unbelief and little faith, *καρδία τεπωρωμένη*, which the evangelist has already, at chap. vi. 52, introduced as a reflection of his own, taking it from the words of Christ on this occasion. Although, indeed, this designation is not to be taken in so bad a sense here as at chap. iii. 5, Matt. xiii. 15. If it is true of others that they never see or hear at all, the same is true of the disciples, at least oftentimes; still, and just because they are disciples, it is the more severely to be reprehended in them, and therefore Christ now for the moment places them on a level with those who have eyes and see not, ears and hear not. As if he said: These thoughts were such as might have occurred to you if you were not at all my disciples! "You have eyes, do ye not then see? You have ears, do ye not then hear?" What follows always when the *heart* is hardened? Of course that we neither *observe* nor *perceive* what truth and wisdom speak to us; where, however, there is no perceiving, there, too, there can be no *understanding*, no being intelligent. Thus in Mark *νοεῖτε* and *συνίετε* are distinguished, while Matt. puts only *νοεῖτε* both times; comp. however, also Matt. chap. xv. 16, 17, as well as chap. xvi. 12, *τότε συνῆκαν*. We can by no means say that *νοεῖν* belongs to the *ψυχή*, *συνιέναι* to the *πνεῦμα*; rather, indeed, inasmuch as we feel and perceive with the believing heart, and the faith-sense is true reason, the *νοεῖν* contains the ground, lying deeper in the *will*, of the *συνιέναι* following out of it. (Hence the exhortation, 2 Tim. ii. 7, *νόει ἃ λέγω*.) Finally, in the case of *disciples* who had already enjoyed for a length of time their Master's company and teaching, had already passed through and experienced so much with Him, although the perceiving and understanding, is always, at first at least, a *seeing* and *hearing*, yet afterwards there may justly have been required of them, a *remembering* of

what was before learned, a retaining and working out of what had been already received, so as from this rightly to know anything new that might be addressed to them. With which last word of rebuke *οὐ μνημονεύετε*, the representation of Mark now again becomes one with that of Matthew.[1]

Christ who, at the second feeding of the multitudes, had only made quite a slight allusion to the first, (Matth. xv. 34), now expressly brings before them both of these together, chiefly noticing the supplies that had remained over. That which Matthew, in respect of the sense, comprehends in Christ's own discourse, is given by Mark in the form of a thorough catechising of the disciples as to what they had forgotten, so that the shamed disciples are obliged to answer; in Mark, too, it is impressively noted that Christ himself brake the bread among the thousands, and therefore so many fragments remained. So literally historical are these *two* narratives (of which many *ἀσύνετοι* are at least for making *one*, if not a fable)[2] here confirmed by the mouth of Christ, in a discourse which the Apostles could hardly have fabricated in order to glorify their master! On the first occasion, there were twelve smaller baskets (*κόφινοι* such as are conveniently carried upon journeys) corresponding to the number of the apostles; on the second, there were seven large *σπυρίδες* corresponding to the seven loaves (see Acts ix. 25)—for they were probably more careful, this time, to take at once vessels sufficiently large for the quantity that remained over.

Christ having thus reminded his disciples of these things, Mark, because he had laid strong emphasis on this at the beginning, now shortens the termination of the discourse into a mere abruptly concluding, *πῶς οὐ συνίετε;* at which, first of all, there is to be supplied as a middle member,—how do ye

[1] On the entire passage compare Beck, Bibl. Seelenlehre p. 56 and 59—with whom I have coincided in the exegesis.

[1] Schleiermacher, too, amongst the number—who "could not make up his mind to believe in the second feeding!" Unfortunately even Neander—we do not, however, retract even in his case the expression we have used above, nor can we sympathise with the two strong eulogies pronounced over the grave of the man who handled the Scripture so unbecomingly. For, leaving aside the Christianity of the heart, all believing science must have neither history nor piety, but the objective *word* for its foundation.

not understand that with me there should be no anxious care about bread? Then, however, as the proper conclusion which is expressed by Matth.: That I cannot have meant bread in my warning against the leaven! *Not bread*—more, however, the Master himself does not say, and leaves it to the disciples, here also, to find out and to understand (or misunderstand) something besides (comp. Matth. v. 12, with chap. xvii. 13.)

CONFESSION OF PETER. CHRIST'S FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS SUFFERINGS. TAKING UP THE CROSS AND FOLLOWING CHRIST.

(Matth. xvi. 13—28. Mark viii. 27—ix. 1. Luke ix. 18—27.)

Here begins at all events a last, brief period of the life of Jesus, previous to his sufferings, and in all that Matthew informs us of it there is a regular chronological connection. (See chap. xvii. 1, comp. there ver. 22 with Mark ix. 30; Luke ix. 43; further, Matth. xviii. 1, xix. 1; comp. Luke ix. 51.) We have no reason for taking Mark ix. 27 in close connection with this, and supposing that "Peter's confession followed close upon the conversation about the leaven of the Pharisees." Rather, as appears from all the other results of the harmony, in forming which we cannot be too careful to include everything in the general view so as not to go wrong in particulars, there lies a considerable intermediate period between Matth. xvi. ver. 12 and 13, in which we, for our part, lay the journey of Christ to the *feast of Tabernacles*, and his probable stay in Jerusalem till the consecration of the Temple, *i.e.* all the contents of John chap. vii. on to x. 39.[1]

In the district of Ceasarea Philippi or Paneas (northwards at the source of the Jordan, different from Caesarea Herodis on the Mediterranean Sea), Christ speaks with his disciples what all the three evangelists narrate in the main substance; Mark says it

[1] Bengel: "The gracious year in Galilee was accomplished, and the Saviour in the midst of his career spent a considerable time in quiet. He withdrew himself more and more from action, and prepared himself for suffering." Ebrard, rightly rejecting Bengel's external principles, has nevertheless given far too little consideration to his grand internal apprehensions and perceptions.

was spoken ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, Luke, that Christ was engaged in *prayer* immediately before, at which the disciples wereeither present, or to which they came. We are not to seek for any close reference in this striking question, thus expressed for the first time, as to who or what the people took him to be; by no means is it merely a momentary inquiry about what the disciples had just been hearing of him on the way, or what the *people* here (in Galilee, Trachonitis, &c.) were saying of him; but his object is now, when his public labours have already in a certain sense come to a close, really to inquire after the result of these labours on the whole, in order to pass from this to a second principal part of his discourses with the disciples, which is denoted by the *public intimations of his sufferings* now first begun to be made, (chap. xvi. 21; xvii. 9, 22; xx. 17.) There is here a great and significant turning-point to be observed. "I am the Christ" —this he now finally confirms and ratifies to his disciples, while he challenges their faith to confess it before him in opposition to the ἄνθρωποι; immediately, however, he adds to this first sentence the second, "And this Christ must suffer and die!" There is in Matthew an unbroken connexion in everything from chap. xvi. 13 onwards: with the confession of Peter in the name of the disciples is connected the promise in reply, addressed to the first apostle, and to all the apostles, to the entire *future church*; upon this directly follows (see the double τότε ver. 20, 21,) the announcement of his sufferings, and all that the address of Peter, now proceeding from another spirit, gives him occasion to add respecting his followers on the *way of the cross*. It is one connected testimony: That he is the Christ, the founder and highest ruler of the true house of God, the King and Lord of the *kingdom of heaven*, which is *his* kingdom (ver. 28), the future *church* (which was only prepared and foreshadowed by the עֲדַת יְהוָה in Israel;) but that his way lies through death to the resurrection, consequently also, that the way of all his disciples and of his whole kingdom upon earth, leads to the victory of confirmation and glorification through a conflict of suffering, through a continual cross consisting in a renunciation of life in order to find it again.

Ver. 13. What now at last do the people believe, think, say of me, after all that I have hitherto done and taught? The question is thus given with a simple με in Mark and Luke,

while Matthew, certainly more directly exact, replaces this or strengthens (?) it by *τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*. For the reading wavers as to whether also in Matthew the *μέ* is to be retained, or (which indeed has only few authorities) whether it is to be cancelled; and there appears here, first of all, to be a great deal depending on this little word in giving a different sense to the entire saying. If we retain it, then it is certainly natural to take the appellation which is added, "Son of Man," already in the Messianic sense. Either with Beza, Piscator, Clericus, to point thus, *Τίνα με λέγουσιν εἶναι; τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου;* Do they indeed know me now to be the Messiah?—or, with Olshausen, to take the words as intimating the truth: *μὲ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (ὡς οἴδατε) ὄντα.* In favour of the former of these readings is the circumstance, that the latter would make Christ to have anticipated his second altogether unassuming question, (ver. 15,) and to have *prescribed* to them himself what their confessing faith is now to bring to him; thus would the only true, and profoundly significant, sense of his awakening question be disturbed. Further, it is against the latter reading that the expression "Son of Man" is never precisely and absolutely equivalent to "Messiah," but while there are pregnant intimations lying behind this appellation, it yet first of all denotes the personal manifestation of this Jesus (now in humiliation, but afterwards also in exaltation.) See especially, chap. viii. 20. Finally, by the latter reading, the antithesis preserved in Matth. is destroyed: Whom do *men* say that the *Son of Man* is? What do they think of this man whom they see and hear with all His works and words,—of me, *this Jesus.*[1] This is the simple sense of the question, as Luther's feeling has rendered it in German with the omission of *μέ*. Are we to suppose, then, that the manuscripts in which it is wanting are right, and that it has been inserted here from ver. 15 and the parallel places in Mark and Luke? This, too, is difficult to suppose, and not necessary, if we only understand aright the added clause *υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, that in the first place it corresponds to the mere *μέ* in ver. 15 and the parallel places. If we hold this fast as we

[1] As afterwards ver. 20, where the predicate *ὁ Χριστός* is joined to this subject, at least as a quite true *interpretamentum* of what the reading *Ἰησοῦς* means.

ought, then we may, if we please, suppose that there lies behind the word an *intimation* of its deeper sense, its Messianic signification, but only *slight* such as is suitable to that kind of asking which will draw out the right answer; this, then, is something quite different from the unsuitable anticipation of an openly announced testimony concerning himself: I am the Son of Man, *i.e.*, the Messiah![1] It is what might thus be extended: *Ye* know now what I properly mean when I at any time thus designate Myself? (And this would be what is true in Olshausen's ὡς οἴδατε, without the too strong ὄντα, which never belongs to this expression). Such a preparatory intimation lies at all events already on the surface in the *Tίνα*—not *τί*—by which Christ asks: *Whom* do they take Me for? Do they give Me the right predicate? Do they perceive and acknowledge that I am *what I am*, or do they think something else and false concerning Me? With a λέγειν εἶναι, to which the εἶναι does not answer, but ἄλλον τινά—?

Christ's reason, however, for putting this question after all that He had done and taught was, naturally and necessarily, that all His past acting and teaching (Acts i. 1) had no other end and aim than to *manifest who He is*, to awaken and establish faith in His person. (John viii. 24). The question here expressed is and remains the great decisive question, which now, with stronger emphasis is ever being addressed to the world and to Christendom; previous to all obeying of His doctrine (as a hollow Rationalism will foolishly speak of this) there must be the knowledge of His *person*. His servants must, in the name of their Master, ask in a way that will admit of no refusal "Who was Jesus? Who is Jesus?" and only the excess of folly and of blindness in the "Friends of

[1] In which impossibility of the usage: Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου—lies the most decisive refutation of this view. The name "Son of Man" in the mouth of Christ, goes over from the most direct import: "This man here," to the hint which lies behind it: "This one, who now appears as man, who will be only man in humiliation,"—which then points farther back to Daniel, and has still more significance, viz.:—Representative of humanity, new first man, &c. Comp. Liebner's reference to Dorner in the Dogmatic of the former l. i. p. 331 Note.

light" has recently *put aside* such a cardinal question with the senselessly naïve remark:—"There the answer is wanting." In another sense may, and ought, the servants as regards their own persons and for their Master's sake also to enquire, what the people say and think of *them*?

Whom do *men* say that I, this Son of man, am? *i.e.*, first of all the bulk, the majority,—what is the prevailing public opinion—which Luke will denote by *οἱ ὄχλοι*, less exactly indeed, but right also, in so far as the disciples were in the first place so to understand it. Christ, however, does not say, *the people*, or even Israel (what opinion is held of Me in Israel?)—or the like, but *men*; thereby He hints, on the one hand, at the universal importance of His appearance for all mankind (which lies also in *υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*), on the other hand, He has thereby in a certain measure expressed what forms an *antithesis* to the following *Ye*—My disciples. How runs the human opinion concerning my person (that proceeding from flesh and blood ver. 17). Thus at least do the disciples understand Him in their answer, which would not be according to truth if its import were what inconsiderate commentators have found in it:—viz., They say all manner of things of thee but the one thing, no one anywhere says of Thee that thou art the Messiah himself, all hold Thee in too slight estimation for that. Were there not in reality many who called Him the *Son of David*? (Chap. ix. 27; xii. 23; xv. 22.) Might there not be many who, after His testimony upon the occasion of the message sent by John, recognised and confessed that he was the expected one, He that should come? (Comp. even at an earlier period John vii. 26, 31, 41.) Do we not find such a confession even long before in Samaria, as we read John iv. 42? Certainly, however, those who thus spake of Him were already also his *disciples*, whom Christ seemed, to His disciples at least, not to include here among the "men," and, therefore, in their reply they only inform Him of all the false opinions regarding Him. They also do not speak first of the enemies who called Him seducer, because this was not the opinion of the people, who rather esteemed Him everywhere to be at least a prophet. They mention first the strangest and newest opinions by which men evaded the truth concerning Him (chap. xiv. 2); then follows what was more

allied to the truth, the folly which recognised not Elias as already come, and saw in Christ himself the forerunner; finally, those expectations of the return of this or that *prophet*, which had been sought out in order to account for Him.[1]

Ver. 15. Now comes the second, properly the chief, question for which the first was merely to prepare the way. The ὑμεῖς placed before has strong emphasis: What have *ye* who have been so long with me by this time learned? Do ye indeed now know otherwise and better than men? It is not enough to know what the people say of the Son of Man—this lay already very prominently in the first question as a trial for them. Here it avails not to reckon up opinions and to have no conviction yourselves! True he says, here again λέγετε, as λέγουσιν before, but now coming closer to them in the tone of trial: *Ye* should not merely *say* it, ye should in faith know and *confess* it! The expression of faith is in itself already a strengthening and confirming of it, and, therefore, does Christ require this of them here. Not, what *think* ye of me in secret as opposed to this confusion of opinions? *Speak* it out, frankly, first before me, then, at the proper time, when the Church is built by and upon your confession, also before men. Then answers Simon Peter τὸ στόμα τῶν ἀποστόλων, ὁ πανταχοῦ θερμός (as Chrysostom calls him), quickly and gladly in the name of all the disciples, taking it for granted that none would contradict, by declaring the same confession which (although perhaps not literally the same) he had already made John vi. 69, and which Nathanael had made at an earlier period, John i. 49. Peter is not only not led astray, but is only the more decided and certain, amid all the confused sayings of the people, and the contradiction in Jerusalem, John vii. 27, 41; viii. 48; ix. 22; x. 24 (where, just before this question of Christ, it had come to the crisis of decision, whether he is the *Christ* or not). He answers, therefore, the question not as it was put with, I say, we say—but

[1] Jeremiah, according to a tradition that took its rise from 2 Mac. ii. 5, 14; comp. 4 Esr. ii. 18. In the case of him and the other prophets we are not to think of transmigration of souls, but Luke has the best expression. In like manner it is not to be connected with John i. 21, or Mark vi. 15—on the other hand, John vi. 14 might be meant thus in ignorance.

the πληροφορία of his *saying* comes plainly and fully out: *Thou art* the Christ. The υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ[1] which in the second confession of the Apostle, is added to Χριστός, is by no means merely synonymous with it, but the second expression of a deeper knowledge. A Nathanael, indeed, (John i. 49), as also a Caiaphas, (Matth. xxvi. 63), knew from the Scriptures which went before that the promised Christ is at the same time the Son of God (which the Scribes, contrary to the Scriptures, overlooked Matth. xxii. 42), and the report of this had come even among the people, see Matth. xiv. 33. The Baptist also testified of *Christ* as the *Son* of the Father, when he explained his Οὗτός ἐστιν. (John iii. 28, 35.) Yet, on the other hand, there was and remained still a difference between a mere recognition of the Messianic dignity of Jesus according to the inferior (Ebionitic) conception of the most of the Jews, and an insight also into His divine nature.[2] Therefore Peter expresses both together here, he confesses the Son of Man to be the *Son of God* (ver. 13), as he opposes the *Christ* to the Baptist, Elias, and the prophets (ver. 14). Christ himself, indeed, had from the first (since John ii. 16) continually testified of himself as the Son of God, and everywhere used this name instead of the doubtful name *Christ*, which by itself might have been misunderstood. (John ix. 35, x. 36). Peter then answers in his confession (as every confession of faith can and must be only such an answer) with perfect propriety to the assumed testimony of Christ: Thou art what thou *thyself* sayest, and testifiest of thyself,—we say nothing otherwise—we have understood thy words and works, we have now learned in thy school so much as to pass the examination which thou art now beginning. He makes the expression finally still stronger, inasmuch as he says, "of the *living* God," which can here be neither a mere solemn formula, as εὐλογητός (Mark xiv. 61), nor, as before

[1] While Luke, leaving out the forcible words σὺ εἶ connects τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ—Mark gives these words indeed, but for the rest retains only ὁ Χριστός. We may see ever anew the preference due to Matthew in the *discourses* of Christ.

[2] Just as, in like manner, there is here a difference between that "first enthusiasm" of a Nathanael, and the matured persevering faith of the apostles at this time. In this Sepp is right ii. 275. Note.

in the Old Testament, a mere antithesis to the false Gods, but which already penetrates into the depths of the testimony at John vi. 57.[1] The understanding of history from without finds in the Son of Man, Jesus, first of all the *Christ* promised to Israel; the philosophy of faith (the expression will be excused), when it rightly reads, hears, perceives, and understands the words, soon finds in this Christ *the Son of the living God;* the gospels declare him, by his own testimony and the confession of his disciples, to be both together—the Gospel of Matthew as well as the Gospel of John, chap. xxi. 31.

Ver. 17. The very remarkable and significant words of Christ to Peter, which now follow, the pronouncing him blessed, and the promise addressed to him first of all, and immediately thereupon the severe rebuke and repelling of his carnal forwardness—all this is entirely passed over by *Luke*, so that the discourse about the cross and the self-denial of his followers thus begins very abruptly. Mark again, in order to confirm this, informs us only of Peter's forwardness, for which he paid so dearly, but leaves out the commendation and the promise that went before. The Holy Spirit thus teaches us plainly enough, that no important and effectively permanent attribute for the Church in all future time, is here ascribed to Peter *personally*, chiefly in that he himself, whose communications Mark follows, has not in any way assumptively given prominence to what is here said to him, although, on the other hand, care has been taken in Matthew to preserve a complete record of these sayings of Christ. If what we read in ver. 18, 19, really had the meaning which the Papists give to it, then surely this appointment of a chief of the apostles, with a continuing caliphate of his successors, must properly be the principal thing with every evangelist, who in general gives any account of this conversation with the disciples; least of all might it be wanting in the Gospel of Peter. We shall see, however, that in all that is said to Peter, according to Matthew, over and above what he, as speaker, in the name of the disciples receives back also in this capacity, there remains only a certain historical temporary preference of his own person.

[1] From which (ver. 69) the Apostle already the first time derived his confession, if the genuineness of the reading could be maintained.

The very first word, μακάριος εἶ, although addressed to the quick and frank disciple who uttered the confession, is yet at bottom nothing else but what in chap. xiii. 16 was already addressed to all disciples in common as such (not even merely to the Apostles.) Christ is perfectly satisfied with the general import of the confession that he is Christ, the Son of God, without missing in this the specially dogmatic speculative acknowledgment, upon which, at a later period, so much weight was laid. (Both in John vi. 69, and again in John xi. 27, in the mouth of Martha this confession is expressly held fast, even when, in other respects, his enigmatic words are not understood.) This is at the first enough for him, so that he can already ascribe blessedness to such faith.[1] He, however, derives even this simple insight of faith from the revelation of the Father. He does not say, I have now often enough testified this to you both by word and deed, so that you may and must at length apprehend it! For flesh and blood does not yet perceive the open truth,—the heart of each individual must open itself to a revelation which it specially appropriates. Let what is said at chap. xi. 25—27 be recalled here, and observe that as there it is the Son who reveals, here the same is humbly attributed to the Father by the Son. And that not *merely* on account of the humility which *here* so becomes him, but at the same time because Christ, inasmuch as he says "My Father," will thus accept and repeat the confession of Peter, confirming and sealing it; as if he said, Yes! I am the Son of God! Further, it is thereby indicated, as indeed Jesus always thus spake and acted in the presence of his disciples, that with all the fulness and clearness of his testimony respecting himself, he yet left over the last decision, in the νηπίοις who accepted it, to the drawing and illuminating power of his Father. Thus, again, does the first agree in substance with the fourth Gospel, (see John vi. 44, 45, 37), and we may reasonably reserve for the discourses in John the more exact interpretation of the fundamental conceptions already indicated here.

But the commendation addressed to Peter in the words, Thy

[1] He does not at once press the disciple further with the question: "But in what sense dost thou know me thus, and how dost thou apprehend the union of the Divine and the human in me." (Braune.)

Father hath revealed it to thee, *i.e.*, certainly alone could reveal it to thee, thou hast heard it and learned it from the Father—must appear at the same time as of a humbling character, by the mention which is made of *flesh and blood*, which cannot properly reveal, but rather only resist. Christ, in the midst of his joy at having brought the disciples now so far, feels sad to think not merely how obstinately and how long the blindness of nature has resisted the light of grace even in them, but at the same time how much of flesh and blood still remains in them (see shortly ver. 22)—therefore he can as yet rejoice over their faith only in this form, and must still connect the commendation which they have deserved with a warning reference to their old nature. It is spoken *ironically* indeed, amid the earnestness of acknowledging love, when the ἀπεκάλυψε is by *catechresis*, with an οὐκ, said also of σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα. Peter has confessed in the name of all; naturally also he receives, in return, in the name of all, the commendation limited by a warning; yet at the same time, Christ has special reason first of all to keep fast hold of him personally, and by no means (as would otherwise have been natural), according to the analogy of ver. 15, to continue thus: Blessed are *ye*, &c., but, thou *Simon son of Jonas*.[1] That is as much as to say, Chiefly has *thy* flesh and blood often enough, to speak ironically, revealed something different to thee, and will yet often thus speak out of thee; *this time*, however, thou hast not spoken as the old Simon who came to me at first, and is even still there. *Son of Jonas:* this is the third term which stands between "Son of man" and "Son of God," ver. 13 and 16, denoting the carnal birth and descent, in *opposition* to the new name *Peter* which is given for the new creature in Christ (hence John xxi. 15—17, where again at the last this humbling designation occurs, without the new name). Certainly not, as Olshausen strangely thinks, from its similarity to the commendation: "Thou art also a child of the Spirit" (Ἰωνᾶ being taken by a play on the word for יוֹנָה, *i.e.*, dove), for partly, this signification of the name is not even certain, on account of that reading in another place, according to which it

[1] Which Matth. purposely makes more emphatic by retaining the Aramaic βάρ (see on the other hand John i. 43), in order that the Nom. propri um may appear thoroughly intelligible.

might certainly be a contraction for יוֹחָנָן, partly, because at all events the *new* name which follows here, as at John i., notwithstanding of its connection with the natural special character of Peter, yet forms, in the *main point* an antithesis to the old birth in general. To mistake this is to destroy the deepest significance of the entire saying, either entirely, or again by an etymologically separate play on the word in the bad sense,[1] in part to deprive it of its penetrating sharpness. *Flesh and blood* —this includes in Christ's thoughts these two things together, namely, the natural *man* Simon as the son of his father, and at the same time pointing back to ver. 13, *men*. See the same perfect antithesis afterwards again at ver. 23. "Neither from men without nor from thyself hast thou this revelation." Completely analogous to this explanation is the entire first chapter of the epistle to the Galatians, with the antithesis that pervades it throughoutbetween the human and divine. In ver. 1, Jesus Christ and God the Father in opposition to the *οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου*, as, at ver. 10, God and Christ to the *ἀνθρώποις*—vers. 11, 12, the *ἀποκάλυψις* in opposition to the *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον* and *παρὰ ἀνθρώπου*—vers. 13 to 16 the *ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί* pre-ordained indeed, at the same time, from his mother's womb (peculiar to Paul as to Peter) in opposition to the former natural Saul,—and then the same antithesis with *σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα* which here still more evidently includes men without (vers. 1, 10—12) along with the natural man of Saul (vers. 13, 14), nay even comprehends the apostles (ver. 17) in a certain sense. This whole chapter, then, so develops itself from the word of Christ to Peter, that it almost sounds as if Paul remembering this, to him well known, saying of the Lord Jesus to Peter, would say : *I am also a Peter*, " my faith and confession is, like his, not of flesh and blood but from divine revelation."

[1] The sainted v. Meyer wrote to me :—" I also suppose in *Jonas* an allusion to the *dove*, but not as Olshausen. John xxi. 15—17, led me to this. The dove is a shy, timid, animal, and points there to the denial of Peter from the fear of man." Lange, moreover, plays strangely upon the word : " before, he was the shy dove of the rock (which seeks refuge in the rock, the church !)—in future he would be the *sheltering* rock of the dove." It is not shelter that is spoken of but a foundation for building on.

This is again an illustration from the Bible which already puts far aside the Romish interpretation of the word that now follows addressed to Peter! So much the more significant, as it is precisely Paul, in whose person is prefigured the immediate validity of every new calling and ordination proceeding from the head of the church, against all historical connection even of apostolical tradition.

Ver. 18. Thou hast said to me σὺ εἶ,—in recompense I *say the same also to thee.* This confirmatory repetition of John 43 is at the same time an advance beyond it. There it was in regard to the presence of Him who should come:—*Thou art* Simon!—but prophetically for the future:—Thou *shalt be called*, become and be Peter! But here it is very different: *Thou art* now Peter, as thou art called, thou, the same Simon son of Jonas, in the personal unity of that which the grace of the Father, revealing the Son in thee, has now already wrought in thy nature through faith. Thou *art*, even now before me, what thou art ordained to be ever more perfectly, in all the future of thy apostolic calling, and therefore art thou called Peter by me; a firm, frank *confessor*, on whose confession and faith something may be built, a strong foundation stone for the building of God upon earth. (As the old temple stood on a foundation of rock —observes Delitzch on this, in the Catechism of the house of God, p. 6). That *this* now applies to Peter no longer merely in the name of all the apostles, but with a certain preference of His *personality*, the Protestant Church ought never to have denied to its own hurt, by an unnatural explanation of the words. It runs strangely enough in the *Berlenburgher* Bible,—"Thou art *a Peter*"—for the meaning of the giving the name and the calling, lies in nothing else than in the circumstance, that this name is entirely so appropriate only to this Simon. Against the explanation, "one of the rocks upon which I build My Church, one of the first preachers and founders of the Church" —Sepp by way of ridicule, is right when he says, "Then also by a logical inference backwards, it is only, Thou art Christ, one of the Sons of God! Καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ—in these words undoubtedly the personal reference to Peter is continued, for Πέτρος is explained by πέτρα only according to its etymology: ὁ πέτρος signifies indeed in Greek also rock, and

was in the Aramaic כֵּיפָא not to be distinguished from πέτρα (so that Christ, to a certain extent, at the sametime really says, And upon thee, this Peter); but, in order to make the sense clear to the *Greek* reader, Matthew must the second time take the *appellative* for the *proper name*. It is not therefore, as well meaning people have artificially sought to make out: And upon myself, the true rock; in which case, in order to take from the ταύτῃ the necessary reference to what goes before, Christ must suddenly have pointed to Himself with His finger![1] And then it would, in this view, be incomprehensible, what in general Peter had to do before with such a saying.[2] Just as little, although the *most* even of the Church-fathers[3] understand it thus, are we to explain it: Upon this thy *confession*—this *faith* in me—this conviction of the fundamental truth, firm as a rock in thee and in others. *Thiersch* is quite right when he says, "The demonstrative can *just as little* have the force of isolating the faith and the confession of Peter from his person, as it would be justifiable to refer the promise to the person of Peter, apart from his faith." Quite recently *Alford* also observes very strikingly, that according to the whole usage of the New Testament, it is not doctrines, confessions, characters, that are designated as pillars and columns of the building, but men, *persons;* in like manner, he refers us to what the same Peter says of the *living* stones, 1 Peter ii. 5. Simon Peter therefore retains indeed the preference as regards his calling and place in the circle of the Apostles, which, already

[1] Which artifice of Protestant criticism on this passage, bringing little honour to the cause, Thiersch compares with the similar artifice of Carlstadt in reference to the words used at the institution of the Supper.

[2] Only on a very superficial consideration and as the result of prejudice can any one find the ancient saying of Augustine to be plausible: Super me ædificabo te, non me super te. Non enim a Petro petra, sed Petrus a petra, sicut Christus non a Christiano, sed Christianus a Christo vocatur.

[3] Lannoy, Doctor of the Sorbonne, out of 77 sayings of the most famous Church-fathers and Church writers has found only 17 which explain Peter himself as the rock; 44, on the contrary, understand the *faith*, and 16 *Christ* Himself. Gregory of Nyssa records particularly that "to this day many will not at all admit that it is the *confession* which is here spoken of." Wieseler is specially arbitrary in his exegesis from this point of view (Chronol. d. Apost. Zeitalt. 585)—as if the πέτρα must be distinguished from the personal Peter!

looking triumphantly beyond the intervening denial, is here ascribed to him. On thee as (whom I will make to be) the first confessor, preacher, and chief apostle of Israel (Acts i. 15; ii. 14; Mark xvi. 7), and even of the heathen (Acts x. 15; 7). Thus does Meyer's note comprehend all that must stand here. But now we go on to say, further, with equal justice:—Peter is the first and chiefest ground-stone, *yet not in his human* character as the son of Jonas, but precisely as Peter,—not *alone*, but with the other apostles—finally, not in himself, which no man can ever be, the proper foundation and rock in the deeper sense.[1] So soon as flesh and blood will again speak, he shall be repelled as Satan. John also and James are pillars with him. (Gal. ii. 9). On the twelve foundations (Rev. xxi. 14), stand twelve names without distinction, as, in like manner, in Matt. xix. 28, twelve seats are promised. Finally (and this is what of truth remains in Augustine's word which is only too sharply applied), upon what then would Peter be built, who does not stand fast in himself, if not upon the one foundation and corner-stone laid by God, of which we read in 1 Cor. iii. 11; Eph. ii. 20; and also in 1 Pet. ii. 4? Christ has significantly said only: On thee will I *build*, *οἰκοδομήσω*—not *found*, *θεμελιώσω*. A man can be the first building-stone upon the foundation of God, and *in so far* himself a foundation, but not more. As a section of the church of Christ rests upon a preacher or missionary whose natural qualifications and new nature together were ordained for this, so upon the apostolical labours of Peter was the whole at first built. But such a foundation-stone is for this reason no head, no prince and ruler over the others, or over the entire house, for it is built on his *ministry*, not on his commands. (1 Cor iii. 5).[2] In the gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the

[1] For our readers this remark will suffice, with a word or two in addition: On the one hand it is least of all true that he had *successors*, and especially in those who maintain that they are such! Bengel's *Quid haec ad Romam?* is enough. On the other hand, we are not even entitled to say that he had equals. Origen's commentary is not (with Alford) to be pronounced excellent: Christ says this as to that Peter, so likewise *πρὸς πάντα τὸν γενόμενον ὁποῖος ὁ Πέτρος ἐκεῖνος*. Against this Firmilian rightly protested, that the Romish Stephen would introduce *multas alias petras*.

[2] "By Peter, this representative of the apostles, being called a rock, nothing else is denoted but the essence of *Protestantism*, the

entire New Testament, there is no trace to be found of such a supremacy, but the contrary, indeed, every where. In Acts vi. the twelve call together the multitude of the disciples; Acts x. 47, Peter asks permission from the inferior attendants who were present, as at chap. xi. he vindicates himself before God and man by a "What was I." In chap. xv. he takes the first word, but James gives the judgment which the apostles and elders, together with the whole Church, sanction by the Holy Ghost; 2 Pet. i. 16, iii. 2, he speaks by *we* with the other apostles, as 1 Pet. v. 1, he is only a fellow-elder; Gal. ii. he receives a rebuke from the reformer Paul. Shall we still further show here in a few words, which are not at the present time superfluous, how the Papists with their Peter are overthrown, if they will only read the Bible and let it be read? Already has Christ himself uttered a sharp prophetical word, as against idolatry towards his mother, so against the false father on earth over the equal brethren, (Matt. xxiii. 8, 9); afterwards, Peter must needs testify in the Scripture against almost all the principal parts of the Papacy. Against lordship over the church, 1 Pet. v. 3, 4. Against a separate priesthood, chap. ii. 5—9. Against assumption over the civil magistrate, vers. 13—17. Against silver and gold and shameful gain, Acts iii. 6; 1 Pet. v. 2. Against unbecoming marks of honour and slipper-kissing, Acts x. 25, 26. Against infallibility, ver. 34. Against celibacy, 1 Cor. ix. 5. Against all righteousness by works, in harmony with Paul, Acts xv. 10, 11; 1 Pet. i. 13, &c.

Upon *this* rock, this true *Peter*, confessing his grace and truth without pride or falsehood proceeding from flesh and blood,—on this future Peter, whom he even now sees standing before his far-reaching glance in the great and strong word of confession—will Christ build His *Church*. For a good building must also have a good foundation (chap. vii. 25). Here, for the first time, in the mouth of Christ,[1] and in general only once again in the

power of the ecclesiastical *personality*." Petersen von der Kirche ii. 99. Of course a personality actively instrumental in the cause of Christ, filled with the spirit and life of Christ through faith.

[1] Not before the death of the Baptist—in this many are for finding a special significance, because till then the old economy lasted. Did it not rather last till the death of Christ?

gospels in Matth. xviii. 17, we find this great word ἐκκλησία corresponding to the Heb. קָהָל and עֵדָה. Although in that second passage the expression obtains at the same time a more special signification, yet, on the other hand, evidently the whole of what is said in chap. xviii. points definitely back to this passage in chap. xvi. so that the fundamental idea can only be the same. In order not to repeat ourselves, we shall therefore postpone the more particular explanation till we come to that passage, where Christ himself says several things of the ἐκκλησία. Here we perceive, in the first place, that He *will* set up a church in the future, that at the same time this will correspond to the true *house* of God upon earth, the temple of the old dispensation (which is evident from the expression *build*), that He alone himself builds (Ps. cxxvii. 1; cxlvii. 2), and therefore it is called *His* church (μοῦ placed with emphasis before), consequently once more, that He himself also alone can and will make all stones for the building, and all workmen, πέτρας and πέτρους, to be what they become, Matth. iv. 19.

Opposed to this building, at this time still lying in the future, for which the promised οἰκοδομήσω from the founding to the finishing is ever being fulfilled (for until the descent of the key-stone from heaven, chap. xxi. 44, the building is not finished, Eph. ii. 21, 22; 1 Pet. ii. 5)—opposed to it the prophetic glance of Christ sees, in fierce assault against it and conflict with it, another house or kingdom unhappily already built; against the *kingdom of heaven* upon earth (which, ver. 19, is in a certain measure a synonyme for the Church) nothing less than the entire *hell* is at work![1] That the gates or doors πύλαι are intended to denote[2] a *power*, is already evident from the κατισχύσουσιν which follows; the expression, however, is used in order to put building against building. *Walls* and *gates* mean defence and power (Is. lx. 18; xxvi. 1); chiefly, however, in oriental usage, as at this day still in the high gate, the gate of the royal palace indicates what we westerns denote by "court"—the throne of the ruler, power and dignity, from which everything comes forth, and to which all returns in his kingdom (Esth. ii.

[1] For αὐτῆς at the end refers of course now to ἐκκλησία, certainly not, as has also been said, to πέτρα.

[2] Least of all a *court of judgment*, the judgment of the dead in the nether-world!

19). Thus are the gates of death, Job xxxviii. 17; Ps. ix. 14 (to which at ver. 15 the gates of the daughter of Zion are opposed) Ps. cvii. 18, not merely entrances, but indicate the power of death, seizing on his prey, and then keeping fast hold of it in his province; thus finally do we find, just as here, in Is. xxxviii. 10 שַׁעֲרֵי שְׁאוֹל, LXX. *πύλαι ᾅδου*; comp. again Wis. xvi. 13, the same thing together with *θανάτου ἐξουσία*. When the promise of Christ in reference to his firmly built Church is usually explained of victory and sovereignty over all the power of *sin*, over the *devil* with his enmity as manifested in malice and rage, in cunning and falsehood,[1] according to what is generally understood by the word *hell*—this is indeed not exact, in so far as the first fundamental idea of the שְׁאוֹל or ᾅδης of the Bible is thereby entirely passed over, although this must be primarily meant here. Christ says, first of all: No power of death, and of the kingdom of death, shall prevail against you, any more than against me, whose death becomes a resurrection—an idea in which he already hastens forward to the second part of the discourse, ver. 21. What is said in Acts ii. 24, iii. 15, repeats itself ever onwards in the members of the Head.[2] But then again, indirectly, that common understanding of the words is indeed quite correct and well founded: for what is the power of death other than the power of sin, which casts down into death, and is properly itself death; what else can aim at destroying the life of the Church but the power consisting in sin and lies of him who rules in Scheol, and has the power of death over sinners upon earth, of which the death and resurrection of Christ forcibly deprives him? Heb. ii. 14. The "kingdom of death" and the "kingdom of Satan," is indeed one and the same.[3] Christ means Satan, without doing him the honour of here naming him; of His own and the Church's certain victory over this strong one he speaks in this strain of humble majesty,—even when triumphing before-

1 Already Jerome: Ego portas inferi reor esse vitia et peccata, vel certe haereticorum doctrinas.

2 The *ἐκκλησία* has, according to Ignatius *ἀφθαρσία* from Christ. It is immortal—perpetuo mansura as the Augustana says.

3 Which, in opposition to Neander (p. 470), is said in order to ward off the one-sidedness of a narrow sense.

hand in the promise of it, yet as it were coming down to the arena, and looking at the heat and anxious solicitude of the conflict, so that he only says, The gates of hell shall not prevail *against* it, instead of saying, It shall *prevail* over them!

Ver. 19. We reserve the more particular consideration of what is here said also for the place where Christ, repeating the word *church* (which when first uttered to the disciples must have been almost quite a dark word), confirms and explains it. Build upon *thee*—commit to *thee* the keys of the edifice—thus does Christ proceed on purpose, as if this second thing were said of Peter personally and pre-eminently; but really only with the purpose of trying Simon son of Jonas, whether he can bear any such thing without boasting. Thou art certainly become an able and important man in my kingdom: What sayest and thinkest thou of this? Dost thou bear thyself humbly, art thou all the more on thy guard against flesh and blood, or—? We know, indeed, what was soon to follow! Certainly, the expression "on this rock" signified before almost as much as "upon thee," yet we feel that Christ could not, and would not, so express himself as to say, I will build the Church of God upon a man! The man is Simon Bar-Jona the sinner (Luke v. 8), not upon him, but upon *this Peter* such as grace makes him; upon him, because, and in as far as, he certainly corresponds to this name more than the others. Still for this very reason the co-ordinate πέτραι and στύλοι (see even the promise in its widest enlargement, Rev. iii. 12) are by no means excluded, and even the primacy of Peter himself rests at bottom only upon this, that he is called to begin the preaching of the word as primus inter pares. So soon, however, as by further inference an actual rule and authority *seems* to connect itself with such a primacy, ver. 19, we then learn upon the second mention of the future Church at chap. xviii. 17—20, that the same authority is immediately given not merely to *all* the Apostles in common, but even in the most proper sense to the *church*, and that to every individual church where two or three are met together in the name of Jesus, just because He, the sole abiding source of all power and rule in this kingdom, is in the midst of them. Only after these connecting words of transition follows then, in John xx. 23, the more particular explanation and reference of the power of the keys to the Apostles

and their successors in office, which with *Paul*, who in like manner exercises that power although he was not then present, we must explain according to what is said in 1 Cor. v. 4; 2 Cor. ii. 10.

As the first part of Christ's reply, Thou art Peter! proceeds only from the κἀγὼ δὲ σοὶ λέγω of Christ (which certainly does not merely contain a confession of what we are, as does our confession to him), as it is only He himself who builds the Church on the πέτρος whom He by his *calling* has made to be what he is (Rom. iv. 17), so, further, all that follows proceeds only from his δώσω σοι. That the *kingdom of heaven* is now evidently "in a certain measure" synonymous with the Church, has already been observed. We can and must still, it is true, make the distinction (for example with Richter): "the *Church* has the keys of the *kingdom*, for it is the institution by which we enter into that kingdom; Christ builds upon Peter, not his kingdom but his Church, which, as regards Christianity, is not *the* form, but only *one* form of its manifestation." Still, here at least, in chap. xiii. and xvi. 28, this distinction is preliminarily not yet more specially brought out; *here* the *keys* belong simply to the *building* spoken of before.[1] That which Christ will *build* upon earth is God's house or temple, but it is a living house composed of living stones, therefore in the first place an *assembly* of the faithful, built upon Him in faith and confession; this ἐκκλησία, however, with all the power and fulness of that which is committed to it, is forthwith a βασιλεία, and that precisely the true kingdom of *heaven upon earth*, hitherto announced and signified in everything, a kingdom which stands as strongly and victoriously above the opposing power of *hell* from beneath, as, in the type, the fruitful and habitable terrestrial globe (תֵּבֵל) above the waters of the abyss and of the first fall. (Ps. xciii., Ps. xxiv. 2.) But, because the kingdom of heaven was immediately represented before as a house to be built, Christ at the same time continues the figure when he speaks of the *keys* which correspond to the *gates*, the going out and coming in. Also in Job xii. 14 the building and shutting stand together; in Is. xxii. 21, 22,

[1] Which, moreover, touches the well-authorized yet subtle determination of the distinction between "kingdom of *God*" and Church according to ordinary usage,—thus have I since expressed myself on this point in the epistle to the Ephesians (ii. 252.)

the key of the house of David signifies the official authority of the householder or administrator, as a burgomaster or commander (of course only as *under* the king) keeps the keys of the city or fortress; which, finally, in Rev. iii. 7, is again represented as the prerogative of the one king and Lord, in his house and kingdom, who certainly cannot commit his own supreme power and dignity by transference to substitutes in his name. Here let so much only be observed in general beforehand, that the power of the keys is the right and power to determine *who* shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, and who belongs to it, who shall abide in it or not (comp. chap. xxiii. 13, where we read of shutting with a falsely assumed right, and Luke xi. 52, of the key of knowledge); at the same time further in general, *what* is to be held valid in it, the power, namely, of distributing or of withholding its goods and graces. When, immediately after the keys, Christ goes on to speak of *binding* and *loosing*, this is not properly speaking a transition to another figure, but is just equivalent to "shutting and opening;" for the locks of the ancients had bands which were fastened or unfastened by the simple key-bar. (See Odyss. *δ*, 802, *θ*. 447, *φ*. 45, 240.) Although, by means of this transition, Christ at the same time refers to the Rabbinical usage which had arisen from the Old Testament, according to which *binding* and *loosing* is equivalent to forbidding and allowing, and already also in the special signification of retaining or remitting sin.[1] And the general meaning recurs again at chap. xviii. 18, without any allusion to the keys. "Key of knowledge" is certainly comprehended in the keys here spoken of, as the first and the starting-point, but we are by no means warranted in saying (with Wieseler) that it is only the keys of knowledge that are here

[1] In the Old Testament the way is prepared for this when אָסַר אֶסֶר (Num. xxx. 3) is a vow or obligation whereby one binds his soul to anything, Chald. Dan. vi. 8 a prohibition, and Ps. cv. 21, 22, אסר evidently passes over into the signification: forbid and command, instruct. (Vulg. ut erudiret.) Compare the Arabic حَبَتْ and حرم. Afterwards in the Talmud אסר vetare, אָסוּר or אִיסּוּר illicitum in antithesis to הֵיתֵר concessum; in like manner שָׁרָא solvere, then also absolvere, remittere, condonare.

meant, seeing that they involve at the same time an authority to act. Christ says here, indeed, as afterwards, chap. xviii. ὃ ἐὰν, ὅσα ἐὰν in the neuter: *what* ye shall bind and loose, not properly *whom*. This authority then is exercised, in the first place, by the preaching of reconciliation or condemnation in general, by the true doctrine regarding the conditions valid before God upon which grace is to be received:[1] but the application, flowing from this, to the *authority* over *persons*, which is so strongly expressed in John xx. 23, must not be excluded. Chap. xviii., in which the saying is repeated, will first make clear to us the full, profound, import and emphasis of the assurance, that whatsoever is thus bound and loosed *on earth* in the name of Christ is, as such, to be ratified also in *heaven*. Bengel's harmony of the gospels contains only the following profound observation on these verses: "Great power of faith in the Son of God. Hell, earth, and heaven are in divers ways conscious of it."

Ver. 20, 21. These verses are connected by the repeated τότε. All that had been announced regarding the future kingdom extends to a period, previous to which the Son of God must first suffer and die. This is the wondrous decree of the Father, the revelation of which the apostles' flesh and blood still kept them from understanding, although it is openly declared to them by Him whom they perceive and confess to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. In order that the fulfilment of this purpose may not be hindered—to speak after the manner of men—rather in order not to aggravate the guilt of those who crucify Christ, the great word which had just found expression in the circle of the apostles, "Jesus is the Christ," is not yet to be made the subject matter of public preaching, as it was afterwards to be from the day of Pentecost onwards. It is not to be declared even where the faith that apprehends it may not hitherto have opposed it, and least of all is it to be insisted on before the time, where it would cause opposition and offence, ere the second great word, which must always stand connected with it—viz., "*Christ has suffered for us*," has become a fact for announcement.

[1] According to Maimonides it was spoken thus on the appointment of a teacher: We give thee the power to bind and to loose. It was, indeed, a symbol of the Rabbinate actually to deliver a key to the person who received the office.

Scarcely are the disciples happy in the joy of their confession, and in the great presentiments of the kingdom of heaven upon earth, which Christ had awakened within them by his little understood words, when he again immediately damps their feeling by the still less understood, terribly sounding, word concerning his *sufferings* and *death!* He had already given them (and not them merely) many a hint about this, the most pointed of which we find in chap. x. 38; but from this time forward, he began to speak of it with literal plainness, which Matthew denotes by δεικνύειν, Mark not merely by διδάσκειν but by the additional words καὶ παῤῥησίᾳ τὸν λόγον ἐλάλει—only Luke gives no prominence to this. The significant word δεῖ, as afterwards Luke xxiv. 26 the retrospective ἔδει, and Matth. xxvi. 54 the δεῖ again when it was being fulfilled, points beforehand to the divine purpose intimated in the Scriptures (comp. Matth. xxvi. 24, with Luke xxii. 22), and is thus certainly not merely equivalent to μέλλει, into which Grotius, for example, would flatten the expression. The last journey *to Jerusalem*, which indeed is as yet in the distance (chap. xx. 18; Luke ix. 51; xvii. 11), stood before him, and all that was there to be fulfilled in him, the first expression of which is here in the words πολλὰ παθεῖν—in which general expression are comprehended the later special intimations of his being mocked, spit upon, scourged, crucified.[1] Mark and Luke add, by way of strengthening the expression: *and be rejected*, in which we are all the more to recognise an allusion to Ps. cxviii. 22 as Christ afterwards expressly says this to his enemies (chap. xxi. 42), and here indeed has just been speaking of building, of stones for building, and foundation stones. The same sad ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι lies implicitly also in Matthew in the mere ἀπό, as Luke xxiv. 20, in like manner declares. Those who, as builders in Israel, should acknowledge and receive him,—from these must he suffer many things, even to the being *killed*. Elders, high

[1] Although before Nitzsch (in Fichtes Zeitschrift, 1840, p. 52), we would like to be held so *considerate* as not to deny that the evangelists, without prejudice to the higher truth, *might* confound words of fulfilment with words of prediction, yet by a like considerateness we see not the slightest ground for the certain supposition that such was actually done. For even Nitzsch will certainly not concede to the critics a *not being able* on the part of Christ.

priests, and Scribes—viz., the most distinguished, most holy, and most learned; the government (or Consistorium, in so far as the Roman government, which the name *Cæsarea* Philippi a little before significantly called to mind, permitted this still to exist), clergy, and faculty in Israel. To be condemned to *death* as an outcast by *these*, and actually to *suffer* this with patience—what an announcement respecting the *Messiah* for the ears of the disciples! They do not comprehend it, they are quite stupified (verblüfft) (*sit venia verbo*), and therefore entirely *fail to hear*, as we know, what is said afterwards quite as literally as to his *rising again on the third day*, in which the earlier hints (chap. xii. 40; John ii. 19) now find their clear and direct expression. (Comp. so on Mark ix. 10)

Ver. 23. Simon Peter, however, who had just been placed so high, ventures alone with bold haste, following the impulse of the first and immediate impression, to protest against what Christ has said. We may imagine the different effect which these words of Christ might produce on the other apostles, according to the individual peculiarity of each—the still, astonished, feeling of a John, or a Nathanael, the prostrate sadness of a Thomas: "Is this then the end to which he is to come?"—quite forgetting for the moment perhaps the preceding words about the Church; on the other hand, the crafty listening of a Judas Iscariot; then again the naive questioning of an Andrew or Philip: "What is this that he says? We understand him not?" None of them, however, ventures at once to give expression to his secret thoughts; Peter alone is bold enough to speak without much deliberation, and he comes out indeed with the most foolish reply. To suffer many things and be killed—this has plainly struck upon his still attentively listening ear, and his flesh and blood has immediately a *No* to give to it! As if he had already the promised keys in his hand, he delivers his protest against allowing upon earth what he considers to be unjust; nay more, as the Master takes the pupil to task, so he takes the Master himself, and would rather at once stop up Christ's way to the building of the Church, because he does not understand him. *Προσλαβόμενος*, *i.e.* he takes hold of him by the arm or garment, draws him aside, and, full of zeal and earnestness, gives him the good confidential counsel, to think better of what he says, and to change his mind!

It must have been so bad that Matthew can use the very striking expression ἐπιτιμᾷν (which, as directed against Christ, occurs only here), together with an ἤρξατο, which, in the exalted irony of the simple narrative, corresponds to that ἤρξατο of Christ (ver. 21). Luther's German translation, "Lord, spare thyself,"[1] does not indeed directly correspond to the first sense and sound of the proverbial expression ἵλεώς σοι, which escapes from Peter, and at which is rather to be supplied εἴη ὁ θεός. It is parallel to the Heb. חָלִילָה לְךָ, for which the Sept. has, in one place, ἵλεως, in another μὴ γένοιτο, but which is still more properly rendered by the German *Gott bewahre! Gott behüte!* (God forbid). But as this, in the form of a proverb, loses its proper meaning, and merely signifies *No, No!* with the additional meaning according to circumstances of: Keep or preserve thyself from this,—so there certainly lies something of Luther's expression in the exclamation. For, that Christ himself, instead of this μὴ γένοιτο, should do what he tells him—this is the good advice which Peter takes him aside to give him. The κύριε, as a strong re-echo of ver. 6, follows rightly after the first exclamation, and is intended to confirm it. Such a thing must not happen to Thee, the Christ, and Son of God! And the good Peter is so confident of his cause, that he, moreover, by way of strengthening and deciding, adds with an almost comical presumption, if it were not tragical on the other side: οὐ μὴ ἔσται σοι τοῦτο—which certainly cannot again (according to Winer) signify merely *absit, ne accedat*, but speaks decisively, as if the matter is at the will of Peter —for which therefore the rendering in *Luther* must be more accurate: That shall not happen to thee, I will not have it so, I know better![2]

And the answer of Christ? It strikes, indeed, sharply at Peter before the others as he deserved, but it is still at the same time addressed to the others, as the continuation ver. 24 shows. Peter had taken him apart, Christ answers him in like manner as the words run, but at the same time he turns again to the rest,

[1] Or even as the Berlenburgher Bible: Have compassion on thyself! Erasmus makes an ill improvement on the Vulg.: propitius tibi sis.

[2] There certainly lies something in this of what Von Ammon so strongly expresses (L. J. ii. 298): Peter puts Christ under care as an enthusiast, who occupies himself with melancholy thoughts!

that they too might hear it, because something of that which in Simon had come out with such prompt candour was in them all. This application and meaning of the words Matthew denotes in his significant brevity by the single word στραφείς, Mark not merely strengthens it into ἐπιστραφείς, but describes more exactly in the words, *and He looked upon His disciples*— finally, also puts a well-warranted, more than compensatory, ἐπιτιμᾷν in the mouth of Christ, in opposition to that of the disciple. Peter's zeal of the flesh is met by a like, or rather an overpowering, zeal of the spirit, and he who shortly before had been pronounced blessed, endowed with high honours, is now, as the words at first seem to run, almost honoured with the title of Satan. Does this mean, perhaps (as many are for understanding it), *a* Satan, adversary, seducer? Wilt thou become a Satan to me? (As 2 Sam. xix. 22.) It seems at first sight as if this were its meaning, and then the foregoing words would signify, Get thee *behind me!* Thou oughtest to *follow me*, instead of putting thyself in my way, and going before with thy advice.[1] But then the second sentence: Thou art a σκάνδαλον[2] to me, would be so like the first as to be almost a tautology, which is not suitable to the profound meaning of the words proceeding from deepest emotion. Further, the *Get thee behind me Satan*, as a repetition of the word in the temptation (chap. iv. 10), is too strong to be thus explained. But then this would be too strong and harsh for poor Peter personally, who, according to the explanation immediately afterwards given by Christ himself and kindly intended to have a softening effect, meant to speak only *humanly*, and did not, therefore, knowingly and designedly speak satanically. How then are we to explain it? I think (with many others) that Christ actually marks in this temptation Satan lurking behind the flesh and blood of Peter (Eph. vi. 12). The first

[1] In this sense what Roos says is true and excellent: "He did *not* therefore bid him entirely away, but behind himself into the place which became a disciple." In no case is it an entire "expulsion from the circle of the disciples," as v. Ammon wilfully presumes, that is here spoken of.

[2] We could not press the word quite so sharply as Alford, who is for supplying the definite article: Thou art my stone of offence, my πέτρα σκάνδαλον! (1 Pet. ii. 7, 8). *This* Judas was to Christ in the circle of the Apostles and that in a much deeper sense.

word is at bottom to be applied to the wicked enemy himself, the second to the instrument of his assault, as appears from the reference of the σκάνδαλον to πέτρα, which is not merely accidental.[1] The future ground-stone now as yet throws himself at the feet of the Master-builder as a stone of stumbling—so little does his fitness consist in anything else than in what this Master-builder will yet make out of him.

It was, in fact, a severe, and deep-searching *temptation* for Jesus this word of his dear Peter, springing from a zeal, which, at heart, was so well meant; this we perceive likewise from the earnestness and warmth of his reply. He cannot answer here with his usual exalted equanimity; for he is very sensitive on the point of this Δεῖ με πολλὰ παθεῖν when any one attacks him upon it—this is the tender, sore point of his own most peculiar and innermost conflict, his own shrinking fear of the baptism of death. The Apostle's flesh and blood expresses what the flesh also of the Son of Man, resisting in human weakness, had long previous to Gethsemane begun to say in him: *hence*, this holy zeal of obedience to the Father, of love to sinners, determined denial of self, hence this sharpness towards the Apostles, such as we find him showing towards his disciples in connection with nothing else. Hence his so suddenly detecting and repelling the Satanic cunning which aimed at making him waver! But scarcely has he said this in the first sentence, as he must and could not otherwise say it, and in the second, has come down again to the person of Peter, when his tender, sorrowful love, vindicating itself, so to speak, in order that the poor disciple may not be too much cast down, adds the *third* exculpatory and explanatory sentence. Thou knowest not, indeed, that and how Satan has now spoken to me through thee. Thou art for leading me away from God's decree, thou art doing so, however, not from intentional opposition to it, but from human ignorance, which must serve the enemy. Thou meanest, thinkest, understandest not, now (only now) τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ—thou thinkest and speakest in the manner of all ἄνθρωποι. Thou certainly meanest well, of that I am sure, and thy ἵλεώς σοι proceeds from a heartfelt love,

[1] The first puts in opposition to the ἵλεως (εἴη ὁ θεός) an exclamation repelling Satan, the second corresponds to the good intention of Peter personally: That must not happen to thee.

as the κύριε from the half faith, which now knows of Christ, but not yet of his cross. Thus does Christ sorrowfully excuse him, although on the other hand it is an earnest warning addressed to him, and shows us here by the most lively example how "the *human* is so often the *profane*," how little men in their *human* feeling can grasp the counsel of God with respect to redemption and his kingdom,[1] how dangerously the love that springs from the flesh comes in the way of the holy love of the Father and Son. This temptation of Christ by Peter repeats itself in a thousand forms in his followers, and is still more hazardous than the direct temptation in the wilderness, being here also placed after that temptation as a higher degree of it. Those whose intentions towards us are the best, are then most dangerous to us when their intentions are merely human. Then it is necessary to know, and to keep fast hold of, the *things that be of God* against flesh and blood from without, by which Satan would entice our flesh and—in us sinners otherwise than with the Holy one—more than our flesh into unfaithfulness; then it is necessary to hold fast that which the faithful Forerunner immediately after holds forth to all his followers, (vers. 24, 25), as the weapon they are to use when placed in the same circumstances.

Finally, there appears in this conflict of the pseudo-Peter with Christ, at least remotely as in a prophetic figure, the presumptive

[1] I cannot forbear adding here a beautiful passage from the profound book (which I would kindly recommend to believing thinkers): Kapplinger, Beschreibungen ueber das Wesen der Gottheit. "It is a spiritual law for the proper revelation of divine qualities and powers, to lay the foundation for the development of these in their perfection under the forms of outward meanness and lowliness. By this process of revealing and unfolding great divine qualities and powers, so opposed to the earthly reason, they, as it were, repel from themselves those qualities and powers that are only earthly and human, so as to reveal themselves according to their original and peculiar divine character, &c. Hence, *Jesus Christ repelled even his disciples from himself*, in order that no foreign and human power might come in to disturb and limit his essentially divine qualities and powers, when revealing them in their perfection. Therefore he had already before said to Peter: Get thee behind me, thou thinkest only what is *human* but not what is *divine*." This is indeed profound exegesis proceeding from a genuine Theosophy of the Cross, and that by a dreamer of Weinsberg. How does it contrast with the shallow treatment of Scripture even by a Schleiermacher, who has nothing more to say than—Christ called the apostle a Satan, one who has not at heart the divine word!

successor of this apostle, in his well-meant human blindness to the mystery of the cross in the kingdom of the cross, (thus mildly to interpret the papacy and the better Papists), on account of which, while he imagines himself to be the representative of the householder, supplying his place, he is really for driving him out of the house. But this is and remains the pseudo-Peter, even with the true confession of the dogma respecting the Son of God, and against this continuing σκάνδαλον on the way of Christ with his church, the words *Get thee away Satan*, proving his power, have long since been spoken once for all.

Ver. 24, 25. These verses have already received their explanation at Matth. x. 38, 39, of which Christ here reminds his disciples with a tacit "Have you then quite forgotten these my words? Must I repeat them to you again?" In ver. 26 there follows then, in addition, the clearest, most decisive, explanation of ψυχὴν σῶσαι. The repetition also gives prominence to the fact, that with all his invitations, Christ must still leave the matter over to the will of each individual, just because it stands thus: εἴ τις θέλει. According to Mark he now calls also "with the disciples" the *people* who were standing near, and speaks openly to them also of his *cross*, as before to the disciples, only indicating, however, and presupposing His own cross in that of his *followers*. This is a further continuation intended for all who will yet become His disciples, as that which was before said to Peter was spoken with an eye to all who are now his disciples; for in the bearing of the cross, there avails no distinction, no rank or preference, from Peter down to the last and the least who will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Luke also observes at least that *He said to them all*—so that, in this instance, the τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ of Matthew receives its correction or rather its explanation from the other evangelists—to all present and future (whosoever will be My disciple, as ye are). *Deny himself*—of this we have already spoken at chap. x.; here let the remark be made, which, there would have reached beyond the first development of the sense, namely that in the strictness of this requirement there yet lies, at the sametime, a comforting mildness. It is presupposed, and, in the meanwhile, acknowledged that the old self is as yet present in the disciples of Jesus, for otherwise there would be no necessity for their *denying* it. And what

else is this denying than *first of all* the λογίζεσθαι of faith (Rom. vi. 11), which is not merely allowed but even required of us by the kindly assisting grace? "As Peter said when he denied Christ: I know not the man! So say thou of thyself and act accordingly." (Bengel.) Not: Let him kill himself, crucify himself—God will take care that this come about by means of the never-failing *cross*, which offers itself for acceptance. Again, that this means nothing merely coming from without, nothing extraordinary alone, we have already seen from the καθ' ἡμέραν of Luke. If thou hast not now precisely contempt, rejection, enmity, from without for the sake of Christ, still thou hast some suffering of body, some burden arising from the transient nature of the world; or if thou hast not this, thou shalt yet all the more assuredly feel the tribulation and temptation of sin in the evil world, thou shalt and must at all events even now feel something of the inward conflict with thy sin, that which is peculiar to thyself, for the denial and destruction of which all that every moment of life brings, has been given to thee and laid upon thee by God. Without this inward cross all outward suffering in the flesh is profitless and unavailing, for an Indian Fakir undergoes the extremest sufferings of this kind which tend rather to the strengthening of his pride, so that they are no real עַנּוֹת נֶפֶשׁ. All bearing of burdens or laying burdens on oneself, without self-denial, is not the cross of which Christ speaks to His followers; all sacrifices and surrenders are vain, if they be not done as He says *for My sake*—Mark, for My sake *and the Gospel's*—*i.e.* in order that we may become partakers of the Gospel, of the kingdom of heaven, which is offered in it. 1 Cor. ix. 23. God prepares the cross for thee; cast it not away, but consider it as *thine*, according to the will of obedience, as if thou thyself hadst chosen it. Deny thyself, say to the opposing will of the flesh: Not as I will—this is the first and fundamental thing. Thus is the cross taken up, and now comes the second word in which the necessary strength and perseverance are held forth: *Follow Me.*

The train of thought in the remaining part of Christ's words, from v. 24 onwards, is therefore so to be understood as that He first lays down the great motive for His followers, and then gives the *grounds* of this inevitable requirement. The nature of the case demands, first of all, as a *present* necessity, that only the death of

the old sinful, selfish, life shall introduce to the new holy and glorious life of Christ, (ver. 25.) Without this, however, if the man continue in *his own* life, if he continue as he is, the whole world will help him nothing, and he cannot thereby redeem himself or save himself from destruction and judgment (ver. 26). This therefore is required *secondly* (which was already implied in the first), in the *future* trial at the coming of the Son of Man to judgment, which is inevitably certain (ver. 27), the certainty of which is *pledged* for by a previous, more proximate coming and revelation of his kingdom (ver. 28).

Ver. 26. Here again is one of those sayings of which we are wont to observe, that there is much to be said concerning them in the way of preaching, but little in the way of interpretation! He who *will* understand it understands it, and, in thus receiving it, the understanding of it becomes more clear and perfect. Christ refers evidently to Ps. xlix., and that not merely in the second half of the saying almost literally to vers. 8, 9: but, in the saying as a whole, he refers to the main import of this entire psalm, in which is declared the nothingness and insufficiency of all earthly good and earthly possessions for the final destiny of the soul at death (see vers. 7, 17—20.) Christ alters, however, and strengthens the words of the psalm—which only declares how no one can redeem the soul of his brother—to: How and whereby may a man redeem himself? *Ζημία* is *hurt, loss, damage*, in anything (Acts xxvii. 10, 21; Phil. iii. 7, 8). Consequently *τὴν ψυχὴν ζημιοῦσθαι* is to lose the soul, or *himself*, as Luke has it, thus evidently explaining it.[1] If, in a general fire raging around thee, thou wert to save and preserve thy great and well-filled palace, and yet be destroyed thyself by the fire—what wouldst thou have gained in comparison with him who, while his goods were burned, has yet escaped with his life? Therefore also conversely: What shall it *damage* a man though he should give up the whole world (which will at one time pass away and be consumed), if only his soul be saved? The true eternal salvation of one human soul is of infinitely more value than the whole world; thus must we set profit and loss against each other, and he who

[1] Ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἀπολέσας ἢ ζημιωθείς—"the being lost is here denoted first as a doing, then as a suffering"—Lange.

has not so reckoned will, in the end, find to his eternal loss how terribly he has miscalculated! Then will the bankrupt be forced to cry out, *What shall a man give;* to which the psalm already furnishes the answer: *It must cease for ever!* And though he alone were to possess the world, it would be no *ἀντάλλαγμα*, no *equivalent* for his soul, as the Zürich translation renders it, nothing that in the exchange could compensate for the lost soul, Vulg. commutatio. But the word expresses still more than this, for it corresponds to the *οὐ δώσει ἐξίλασμα, τὴν τιμὴν τῆς λυτρώσεως τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ* Ps. lxix. 8, 9—Heb. כֹּפֶר and פָּדְיוֹן. That must be *οὐ φθαρτά* (1 Pet. i. 18). Christ at the same time hereby testifies, that God alone has found out the *ἀντάλλαγμα*, and *λύτρον* (Matth. xx. 28): he who despises this, who makes its power and sufficiency of none effect for himself—what shall he be able to give of that which belongs to another?

Ver. 27. The same reason is further given as formerly in chap. x., according to our interpretation of that passage: There lies before us in the judgment a *trial*, in order to be prepared for which, we must now let our soul be redeemed, saved, sanctified, and kept by Christ's cross. Then it will be no loss to have borne this cross, but an eternal gain, while, on the other hand, it will be no gain to have possessed the whole world, but an eternal loss! According to Matth., Christ has said here by anticipation what he afterwards said (chap. xxiv. 30, xxv. 31). The same Son of Man, concerning whose present appearance in lowliness the discourse began at ver. 13, will appear personally a second time; as the first time he appeared entirely as Son of Man in our weakness, so, although still the Son of Man, He will yet then manifestly appear as the Son of the living God; in the glory of His Father, which is at the same time His own glory (chap. xxv. 31; Luke ix. 26), with *His* angels serving Him as Lord (chap. xiii. 41). Mark and Luke have, instead of this, another saying which Matth., with still further alteration, repeats, and we may well suppose that, on this occasion, Christ used both sayings. It is the only occasion on which we find this expression in the mouth of Christ: Whosoever is *ashamed* of Me—which is still sharper and more reprehensatory than the denying, spoken of in Matth. x. It cannot, however, signify: Whosoever is ashamed of the *Son of Man*, for this name always denotes the

visible presence of Christ, whether in its more lowly or more exalted manifestation—but, quite properly, of Me and *My words*, the confession and following of my doctrine and truth, in which I myself am now here for the sake of the world, previous to my coming again to judgment. In Mark what is said before (ver. 35), precisely corresponds to it: for my sake and the *gospel's*, (Rom. i. 16). Mark alone adds besides, in order to bring into full light the criminality and perversity of being thus ashamed: in this adulterous and sinful generation! (Matth. xii. 39).

Ver. 28. In the μέλλει, (ver. 27), Christ has represented His second coming to judgment (which must point to something else than the rising again, ver. 21), as a thing, indeed, perfectly sure, (Luther: will certainly happen), but still as belonging to a more remote future, to a final end which is left quite undefined. But in order that this may not prove too faint and too wide a prospect for the disciples and for us, in order that even from these words we may know already, at least in general, how it shall stand with the building of the church,—of course after the resurrection of Christ when the rejected stone has become the corner-stone,—how it shall be in regard to the therein valid representation of the master of the house by means of regularly appointed holders of the keys, nay how, in regard to the conflict, also announced to the church, of the powers of hell against it—to show this, Christ adds a word which could scarcely have been wanted (as, it is hoped, will be evident) for the complete rounding off of the entire announcement which he here makes. With a here concluding Ἀμήν (Luke ἀληθῶς) he again announces a *coming* of the Son of Man, a more mediate, more proximate coming, which is to be the pledge of His coming to judgment. That this latter coming is not what is here spoken of is incontrovertibly evident from its being said that those who have seen this other and nearer coming are yet afterwards to *die*, which can have no application to the last day.[1] It is evidently, in the most general conception

[1] The confusion in Hofmann (Weissagung und Erfullung ii. 272)—according to which Christ is represented as having actually expected the last judgment before a generation should pass away—takes its rise from this, that men, despising the genuine tradition of the *fundamental conceptions* of the *Bible*, are ever for building their exegesis upon their own self-wisdom.

of it, the same coming of the Son of Man that is here meant as was spoken of chap x. 23; for Christ points back here, throughout, to what was said there, at the sending out of the apostles. Christ comes in *His kingdom* (comp. Luke. xxiii. 42), with His kingdom, when He sets it up, reveals His power in it and by it; and, precisely hereby, is the coming at first *in His kingdom* to be distinguished from the *visibly personal* coming. Mark and Luke, therefore, as regards the sense, quite correctly change the saying (which Matth. retains in its original form as connected with chap. x.), so as to explain it in opposition to any misunderstanding of it. Luke, indeed, says only until they *see* the kingdom of God—where the strongest emphasis rests on the seeing with the eyes what has actually been brought to pass. Mark more distinctly has, in addition to this, the words ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει, in which the original ἔρχεσθαι, spoken of Christ himself, is applied to His kingdom, but quite correctly so, in as far as the δύναμις of the coming King, the efficacious power of His invisible presence, displays itself in the establishment and maintenance of the kingdom. See in Rom. i. 4, and 2 Cor. xiii. 3, 4, the interpretation of this ἐν δυνάμει. *His kingdom* is His church, as also Matt. xiii. 41. He assures His apostles, then, that the setting up of His church, announced ver. 18, shall be accomplished even in this generation, and He expresses this by the striking words which all the three evangelists have preserved: that *some* of those now *standing here* (among whom are by all means to be understood those also of the people who were standing around, although at the most only secondarily) would not taste or experience death (which can only be meant here as at John viii. 52) until his kingdom, and therein his power and presence, be as clearly displayed to their view as if they saw Christ himself already come. Consequently he can least of all mean by this, the transfiguration which immediately follows ver. 17,[1] nay, not even merely the building and continuance of his Church in general, beginning with the day of Pentecost; for how then would he, thus selecting, speak of *some?* And, although we may not strain this expression, so as to make it mean that only two or three of

[1] A curious idea of many commentators, beneath which there lies only so much of truth, namely, that this transfiguration was again a very natural figurative pledge of all future glorification.

the apostles should survive, what he announces there still remains a τινὲς μὲν, to which corresponds a τινὲς δὲ, *who shall taste of death before they see.* We therefore rightly understand this, as at chap. x. 23, of the great catastrophe of the destruction of Jerusalem, the setting up of the New Testament Church, which was then first fully ratified and manifestly loosed from Jewish entanglements, of that ἐκκλησία which, in Rom. ix. 24, is already described with believing anticipation. Then also did Christ *come* in his power to *judgment*, foreshadowing the judgment of the world, so that all who believed in his power to save, and who have since become his people (Rom. ix. 25, 26), have before their eyes in that event a pledge, equally consoling as it is warning, of that which is testified of as in the remote future in the words μέλλει ἔρχεσθαι, ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ. (Comp. Deut. xxxii. 36 with Heb. x. 30). John xxi. 22 also belongs to this as an appropriate parallel passage; how many even of the apostles may, with Peter (and Paul) have tasted of death previous to this event we know not.

THE TRANSFIGURATION. THE FUTURE ELIAS.

(Matth. xvii. 7, 9, 11, 12; Mark ix. 9, 12, 13).

Luke ix. 28 points in the expression, μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους, at the inner connexion between the transfiguration and the first announcement of suffering on the part of Christ, even more strongly than the two other evangelists, who mention the number of days that intervened. It will be difficult, in this instance, to adhere to our plan of interpreting the *sayings* of Christ, and not the narratives, and it may here also be said with special truth, that only the perfect understanding of the whole occurrence can open our ears for perceiving the innermost, peculiar force of the word of Jesus: *Arise and be not afraid!*

On the day at least, on which he takes[1] with him up to the high mountain the three disciples, who had already been the

[1] Already in the unusual expression ἀναφέρει there is something that indicates how he took them up with himself, brought them before God (compare Luke xxiv. 51).

selected witnesses of the first miracle of raising from the dead, the sons of thunder, and the man of rock, Christ knew that something was now to happen to him, and in general what that was. That question, six days before, which denoted that the turning-point in his course was now reached, from which the Son of God approximated ever nearer to his sufferings, was already a presentiment of this testimony that was now to be given by the Father, and which was to seal the confession of the disciples. The innermost reference to Christ himself of this voice sounding at the middle-point between Matth. iii. 17 and John xii. 28, with all that accompanies it, the parallelism between this *consecration to his suffering*, and the first inauguration at his baptism, is now more distinctly acknowledged by the more recent orthodox theologians than it ever was by the ancients; it is no longer deemed enough to find in it merely a testimony for the disciples who *beheld his glory* (2 Pet. i. 16, as also Luke ix. 32), but it is now explained of the new anointing for the knowing and doing of his work, which was here given from above, especially to the Son himself.[1] He who for us is to enter by a voluntary death int glorification, in order that He may fulfil all righteousness, must first learn and actually experience in regard to Himself otherwise than by the knowledge arising from faith, that the δόξα of light and life is already present in His humanity, that it *can* break forth in Him, and radiate from Him, even without His passing through death—in order that thus anticipating the Father's good pleasure, He may be prepared to deny this self, and to empty Himself of this glory even to the cross. He who thus fulfils the law and the prophets, must now already beyond the limits of death hold a secret council with the personal representatives of the *law* and of *prophecy*, who have beforehand some participation in the fruit of His resurrection,[2] who at Mal.

[1] We may refer chiefly to the profound expressions in Beck, Christliche Lehrwissenschaft i. 512, and following. With wilful ignorance, Schleiermacher says: "In vain do we take pains definitely to represent to ourselves an aim for this mysterious occurrence."

[2] In the bodies of both we find a wonderful exception to the general fate of death, although the lawgiver actually died beforehand on account of sin, while the prophet was already lifted up nearer to the victory over death. Not that they were actually, before the resurrection of Christ, the first-fruits, clothed with the final resurrection-body, but

iv. 4, 5, appeared together as closing the old covenant,[1] and now, in the heavenly imperial council before the throne of the *μεγαλοπρεπὴς δόξα*, stand upon the threshold of the new covenant, as the *Baptist* in the character of the typical Elias did upon earth for the people. *Μετ' αὐτοῦ συλλαλοῦντες*—by this one well-chosen word (which Mark and Luke also retain), does Matthew veil from us the wondrous words of the symphony, in those higher regions as yet concealed from us by the cloud of the ascension, where the Son receives from the Father *honour and glory* in the words, This is, &c. Luke is permitted to lift the veil a little, and plainly to show us (what we might of ourselves guess and perceive) the sufferings of Christ, announced to the disciples a week before, as the centre-point of these heavenly words, from the sanctuary of which, the supreme Praeses of the council then again refers us to the earthly words of Christ. They spake of His *decease*, which (now near at hand) He should accomplish at Jerusalem, to accomplish which He now, a second time, more especially consecrates Himself to the Father, devotes and fortifies himself, as the first time at the *εἴσοδος*, Acts xiii. 24. *Ἔξοδος* here certainly does not signify (according to Schleiermacher) the "calling" to be fulfilled (*δρόμος* Acts xiii. 25; xx. 24), but evidently, in the first place, the end of life as Wis. vii. 6; 2 Pet. i. 15, still not without a prospective glance at the turning of death into life, so that the "rising again" (chap. xvi. 21, xvi. 9, 23), is at all events included: the victorious accomplishment, result, and issue of this death, which for Him and us is at the same time *ἡ εἴσοδος εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν*. 2 Pet. i. 11. (Just as at Heb. xiii. 9.) Let it be considered what the Apostle (2 Pet. i. 16,) means by *δύναμις καὶ παρουσία*! Those who have prepared the way for him to this מִקֶּדֶם, and are, therefore, well acquainted with it, now speak with Him and to Him concerning it,

their death and state after death has yet something in it specially mysterious. Here lies still another secret: if already at that time, as the Tract. שְׁקָלִים teaches, the half shekel for the temple was collected in the month Adar, and if there was ground for the tradition in Josephus of Moses' death having happened on the first of Adar, then was Christ transfigured, perhaps, on the anniversary of the Lawgiver's death.

[1] Therefore not merely (according to v. Gerlach): The *Founder* and the *Restorer* of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament.

but still more He to them,[1] putting Himself in the position of one ready to answer their questions, in order that they may rejoice before Him in His glory with more perfect understanding and clearer view than the disciples, who are as yet heavy with the sleep of earth—also, indeed (as Roos mentioned), that they may now bear to the invisible world tidings of Christ's willingness to undergo the redeeming death now near at hand.

Then the light-cloud becomes to the earthly eyes the blinding, overshadowing darkness of the sanctuary; the two are already entered into it, the three are terrified without, for it is not yet time to build the eternal tabernacles of glory on the earth, which must first receive for its purification the blood of Christ from the hands of sinners. *Jesus alone* remains before their eyes, and the supremely decisive *voice* of the eternal Father in the inaccessible light which no man hath seen nor can see, comes from out the cloud. Even when the vail of the heaven is for a moment withdrawn, we are only referred back to earth, to the Son of Man and of God struggling in lowliness, passing by sufering into glory. The second voice of the Father, which directs to the *words of the Lord Jesus*, as the first did to His person, speaks in the words of Scripture, of Psalms, Prophets, and Law (Ps. ii. 7; Is. xlii. 1, 4; Deut. xviii. 15, 18), and invests him with the *honour* of *king* because He is the Son (Ps. ii. 6), of *priest* as making an atonement with which God is well-pleased, of *prophet*, who is to be heard along with and above the law and the prophets, inasmuch as He bears testimony of Himself and the Father's purpose in Him.

The disciples fall in great fear on their face; He, however, in most exalted dignity, calmness, and might, *touches them*, as once Gabriel did the prophet (Dan. viii. 19, ix. 21, x. 10), and speaks

[1] As, in this instance, Ebrard, who in other respects with good apologetical intention is for remaining as much as possible on the surface, cannot refrain from saying here finely: "In the transfiguration, Jesus had given to the fathers of the old covenant the blessed knowledge of his willingness to redeem them by his death, and, at the same time, to the publishers of the new covenant the unity of that covenant with the old, and Christ as the Fulfiller of the law and the prophets, was visibly manifested." Only, in order not to go against the ἔλεγον of Luke, we must not exclude the joint-witness already proceeding from them.

to them his old familiar words "*Arise and be not afraid*," with a new and peculiar significance at this moment. Not yet as afterwards Rev. i. 17, 18, and yet already as the same one.

Ver 9. Christ calls it an ὅραμα, *i.e.*, ἃ εἶδον, as Mark says, in Luke ἃ ἑωράκασιν, and includes in this the whole manifestation and revelation, together with the voice which they heard; for certainly this was no ordinary seeing and hearing, but a perceiving with the opened eyes of a faculty of perception which is ordinarily closed, and which was partly brought about in the disciples by their falling into sleep, through the divinely inverted reaction against the influences from beneath. (Num. xxiv. 3, 4.) But there is a great mistake in supposing that this sleep-waking seeing and hearing, to which we have only a remote analogy in somnambulism, and in the vision of Balaam[1] is something inferior and uncertain, and not rather a waking, to which the common form of waking stands in the same relation as does the state of dreaming. Christ speaks here truly, not according to that usage of men, which puts the ἔραμα βλέπειν (Acts xii. 9), in opposition to the reality of a thing that has actually taken place. To begin by proving this, appears to us as needless for believing, as it would be vain for unbelieving readers. True, indeed, a preacher in the open pulpit in Görliz, on the 6th Sunday of Epiphany, has even recently ventured to explain the whole occurrence as a dream-vision;[2] this preacher must certainly also hold the second epistle of Peter to be apochryphal!

[1] It is difficult to explain in Luke διαγρηγορήσαντες. If it were taken to signify watching the whole time through (as πάσης τῆς νυκτὸς διαγρ. Herodian iii. 4, 8), this would be a complete contradiction to βεβαρημένοι ὕπνῳ. Better certainly: watching *in the intervals*, as in diseased sleep.

[2] J. L. Haupt in *Nehmiz* and *Sonntag* Predigtsammlung: "Christ himself calls it a vision, and seems to guard his disciples against the delusion that they had actually seen Moses and Elias, inasmuch as he afterwards explained to them that Elias is already come,"—namely, in John the Baptist, and nothing farther!! Neander also unfortunately finds it to be a *dream* (the disciples having dreamt of the impending event at Jerusalem!)—mentions himself, indeed, the strong objection that then the three had the same dream—solves it, however, still worse by the supposition that after all it was only Peter; speaks, moreover, of John's not mentioning it in a manner which we must pronounce foolish and unjustifiable. Thus does Neander place himself on a level with Hennel, who reduces the whole to a dream of Peter.

But, in answer to all critics who take this epistle which seals the evangelical record to be not genuine, we only exclaim with the most perfect confidence, in place of adducing any external grounds: O ye psychologists, O ye Christian psychologists! The supposition that words, doctrines, testimonies, such as are to be found in the second epistle of Peter, from the beginning to the end of it, have proceeded from a forger's own invention, that such strength, such enlightenment, such confidence of speech, could exist in one and the same mind along with a pious fraud—that this μυθολόγος, when, in a "second epistle," he designedly counterfeits the person of the apostle, still exhorting, confessing, and prophesying before his death, has had the impudence expressly to renounce σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις, and with this impudence at the same time has such gifts of knowledge and of boldly original discourse—this hypothesis contradicts all the psychology of Christian feeling, and this the true defenders of the genuineness of the epistle should not be ashamed openly to confess as the dictate of their Christian feeling.[1] Truly when Peter then wrote, he *knew what he was saying.*

So much concerning the word ὅραμα in the mouth of Jesus, whom we are to hear, and with him, those of whom he has said: Whosoever heareth you heareth me! and whom he indirectly commands to make known this ὅραμα afterwards, in that he forbids them to do so till after the resurrection. He includes the testimony concerning his glory as Son, now seen and experienced, in the first prohibition, chap. xvi. 20, 21, and thereby points once more to the "rising again" which was then not heard. Now, indeed, the disciples must take up this *word*, and retain it for a while, but they rather take it in some figurative sense than in the proper sense, and make out of the clearest letter a dark question, because they would not understand the death spoken of before. Mark, ver. 10. You are to tell it to *no one*, not even to your fellow-apostles. How hard may it have been for them to obey this command, with their habit, otherwise laudable and amiable, of repeating and communicating to one another all that happened to the Master! But in order that they may

[1] Very beautifully has Bonnet, in his excellent writing, la Parole et la Foi (Geneva and Paris, 1851, against Scherer), thus adduced the argument for the second epistle of Peter, p. 27, 30.

not be vain of this preference shown to them in being selected as eye-witnesses, and that the others may not in their present folly envy them on this account, in order that the whole thing may remain what it is and should be, not a spectacle for eyes that are intent on seeing wonders, but a testimony afterwards to be transferred by the spirit to the word so as to be believed, a voice of the Father—for this end Christ has admitted only three to the knowledge of it, and now forbids even these to speak of it before the time. They must also obtain their honour in the matter by denying themselves. First: Can ye be silent? are we worthy to meditate on, and to keep holy mysteries? Then shall ye at one time tell them before the world!

And his disciples, of course the three who now descend with him from the mountain (see more exactly Mark ver. 9, 14), embrace the opportunity, ere they are compelled to be silent, now when they are coming down to put to him one of the many questions which perplex their minds. They do not venture to come out with the great cardinal question about the *rising again* (of course not the resurrection in general as believed among the Jews, but the rising again of *Christ*, of whose death they will hear nothing); but, next to this, it was most natural for them to ask about the appearing of *Elias*. That Elias must come before the Messiah, had perhaps already before this suggested itself as a matter of secret doubt to their minds; in Matt. chap. xi. 14, Christ had already explained this of the Baptist, and their *ears* indeed had heard what was then said; now, however, another Elias, the personal Elias, has just appeared to them, and scarcely have they seen and heard what then appeared to them, when it has vanished again, and they are to tell it to no one! All this brings powerfully to their minds the saying of the scribes, and the question how all this perplexing appearance, which has just been presented to their eyes, stands related to that saying. Not that the meaning of their question could be: It is certainly only a saying of the scribes? But, wherefore has he again disappeared, and are we not to make it known? What avails it that he is come? And in what way hast thou meant that John also is the future Elias? They do not, however, speak out clearly all these questions, as

indeed, in the confusion of the moment, they must have been complicated in their own minds; but, in the manner of men who are shy in putting a question, and who never speak clearly out, they ask generally: What then do the scribes say? *i.e., what dost thou say to this*, that they so say and teach? Inform us of this matter, and give us the solution of it! (This is the sense of the ὅτι in Mark, which puts the question indirectly; it is not equivalent to διότι or διατί afterwards in ver. 28, as in the LXX., in Josephus, and also in the profane writers, but to be supplemented thus: How does it therewith stand related that —?) And if we only ask *Him* concerning all that the Scribes say, he gives willingly the right information, as much as we can bear.

Ver. 11, 12. Whoever, in this answer of Christ, would explain away the manifest and striking confirmation of the fact, that a coming of Elias was yet to take place, must do great violence to the words, and will never be able to strain the Future ἀποκαταστήσει πάντα, in form and import, so as to be applicable also to John the Baptist. In Mark, the first clause stands as plain, though not so precise, with ἀποκαθιστᾷ in the Present, as in Matthew there is only the directly confirmatory ἔρχεται. Christ cannot possibly have intended to say anything else, as the words run, than quite decidedly: By all means the Scribes are right, Elias comes or *must* come *first*, ere the entire setting up of the Messiah's kingdom, in the most proper and final sense, takes place. He does not, indeed, hereby confirm the errors and fables which the earlier or later Scribes connected with it, he only confirms in general the doctrine and expectation, not as a saying of the commentators, but as a simply to be read γέγραπται. For as has been already said, by אֵת אֵלִיָּה הַנָּבִיא with the article, the sacred text in Malachi can only mean the historical person; so much the more certainly that, immediately before, Moses is designated by a like nomen proprium, hence the LXX. have rendered it precisely by τὸν Θεσβίτην. The Christian Scribes of the present day, indeed, easily settle such matters—"they rough-plane it very cleverly, and say, It is a Jewish representation—though they are not well acquainted even with Jewish representations."[1] But the Church Fathers teach, with the Jews, a future

[1] To apply the words used by Meyer in connection with another subject.

return of Elias, because Christ has here confirmed it as it stands written. Justin, for example, acknowledges this to Tryphon; Augustine connects Israel's conversion, and their final true and spiritual understanding of the law as fulfilled in Christ, with the labours of this prophet (de civ. Dei lib. 20. c. 29). The more particular investigation of all this, and the question whether Elias is also one of the two witnesses in the Apocalypse, does not belong to this place, where we have only to establish the clear statement of Christ.

Ἀποκαταστήσει πάντα—this connects well with the expression of the LXX., ὃς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδίαν for לֵב הֵשִׁיב, but, by the πάντα conjoined with it, the idea is so much extended as to become almost something different from the bringing back of the heart of the fathers to the children, which is there said. Καθιστάναι, means to set up, to restore,—compounded with ἀπό, it is intensified so as to mean: perfectly or entirely to set up, to bring anything to pass, so as to be what and how it should be.[1] Yet there lies here in the πρῶτον, a necessary limitation of the πάντα, implying that the forerunner does not already set up the kingdom (Acts i. 16)—for what then would remain to be done by Christ himself? Consequently: He will *put everything in order* for the kingdom, will completely accomplish the work of *making ready a people prepared for the Lord* (Luke i. 17), committed to him as his office, in a wider and more proper sense of its fulfilment than John preliminarily and typically did. It is not a *restitutio omnium rerum in integrum*, that is spoken of here, any more than afterwards at Acts iii. 21, where, moreover, this manifoldly significant word is differently applied, so as to refer to the presentation of *all that has been prophesied of* in its fulfilled reality. What Elias agreeably to his character did at first in the kingdom of God, by pointing powerfully to the Lord in a period of most melancholy degeneracy, and as a reforming prophet repairing the altar of the Lord that was broken down (1 Kings xviii. 30), in order that the fire from heaven might come down upon it—the same is represented as being done by him, also at his return, and that with abundantly more effect. This he *shall* do—how

[1] A much stronger idea than merely to "bring back to the right track," as Neander makes it.

could Christ mean *by this* the work of the Baptist, who had already come, which remained for the most part fruitless, whose coming together with His rejection, and His being given over to the will of the unrighteous, forms rather the sharpest antithesis to the first ἔρχεται?

And yet in the words, *But I say unto you*, Christ certainly says in addition to this that, in a certain sense, the person of John was also meant by the prophecy respecting Elias. We see, therefore, that this prophecy, according to Christ's manner of interpretation, which affords a rule for many others, fulfils itself twice, and His present statement is in perfect harmony with what He said before at chap. xi. 14 (as we there explained it). Every half fulfilled prophecy will, at one time, be entirely fulfilled, so that not an iota of its word shall fail of fulfilment; many, even by far the most of prophecies again, have their typical before their final fulfilment. They knew not the first Elias —would not take him for what he was (chap. xi. 14),[1] but did to him *whatsoever they listed*—and yet only what was at the same time already foreseen, ordained, and written. (Comp. Matth. xxvi. 24 with Luke xxii. 22.) *They* have done what happened to him; for Christ imputes not merely to Herod and Herodias, what they did according to the mind and in the name of many, and reckons in the ἐποίησαν all that the people collectively did against him, which proceeded from the οὐκ ἐπέγνωσαν, the natural result of which was the martyrdom of the preacher of repentance, who was as it were left in the lurch by the nation.[2] In like manner it awaits the Son of Man (now in the immediate future) also to suffer from them! This simple extract of the principal thing in Matthew is explained by the fuller and more exact statement in Mark, where, by a striking turn, the *question* immediately follows—properly a convictive counter-question to the disciples: How then (if there be only one coming of the Messiah and Elias) can it be written of the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be set at nought? (ἵνα for ὅτι, ver.

[1] "Thus is many a great man not known during his lifetime, even supposing that he also were prophesied of in the Bible!" Roos.

[2] Sepp, strange to say, finds here the first information and discovery made by Christ to His disciples, that John the Baptist was killed.

30, and the strong expression ἐξουδενωθῇ not without reference to Isa. liii. 3 לֹא חָשַׁב, Dan. ix. 26 וְאֵין לוֹ, in both of which passages the LXX. have quite mistaken the meaning). Inasmuch as the scribes do not read and understand *this*, their saying about the coming of Elias is onesidedly false; rightly understood, however, the two things are quite compatible, for there is a first and second Elias, just as there is a first and second coming of the Son of Man. That *the scribes* have derived their saying, *Elias must first come*, in general truly from the *Scripture*, although they do not understand what this specially means, is finally denoted again by the words *as it is written of him*, in which it is maintained that the sufferings of the first Elias, as well as those of the Messiah, were the subject of prophecy. For it will not do to supply here merely: in general, that He is to come; but our interpretation is as yet too dim-sighted to discover with certainty, where the prophecy of John's fate is to be found. Some have said that from the foretold sufferings of Christ an inference may be made implicitly to those of His forerunner, or that the record of the Tishbite's life shows us the antitype in the type.[1] Both of these conjectures, however, are insufficient, the latter also, whatever truth belongs to it, does not go the full length, as the agreement fails precisely in the death of Elias; it is reasonable, therefore, in us to wait for a future opening up of the Scripture. He who, in regard to the prophetical word, cannot bring his proud, learned heart to this, as in many places it is proper to do, is not qualified for attaining by humble investigation to an understanding of prophecy. He, in fine, who "is not ashamed"[2] to declare that it is *preposterous* "to find in the Old Testament the Christian idea of the suffering Messiah," and who, in the character of a Christian scribe, is so bold as to contradict the Lord Jesus to his transfigured face—such a one we

[1] So Hengstenberg: Christ considers the history of Elias as a prophecy of the history of John; he shows even how John *cannot* at all be Elias if he did not experience contradiction of sinners, rejection and suffering.

[2] De Wette on the practical explanation of the Psalms, p. 18, 19. A scarcely credible specimen of confused statements with bold assertions is this little work as a whole, whose abuse I reckon an honour. Should not the author, now dead, have been himself a little ashamed of *this* opposition, in his last and better days.

should in vain ask to read and hear how Christ again, in all that He says, points back to His *sufferings*, of which it stands *written*; how He manifestly distinguishes between His first and second coming, and thus alone gives *the key to the understanding of all the Old Testament prophets.*

THE LUNATIC: THE UNBELIEVING AND PERVERSE GENERATION.

(Matth. xvii. 17, xx. 22; Mark ix. 16, xix. 21—29; Luke ix. 41).

What a change, to which we find nothing similar in the life of Christ! From the Mount of Transfiguration, out of the opened heaven, he comes down to the vale of tears, and finds the distress of a more than ordinarily fearful case of demoniacal possession, finds the mockery of the Scribes directed against the disciples who were left behind, finds unbelief in Israel, unbelief also in His own disciples, and His difficult work with this generation begins forthwith anew. From the sanctuary, into which *His* perfect faith has introduced Him, He comes forth—and what a spectacle meets His view! Nothing more natural than that all He now says should bear the stamp of holy passion and zeal coming from the depths of His bosom, as well as that the ground-tone of it all continues to be a complaint against their unbelief, and the overpoweringly pressing invitation to faith. Matthew gives prominence to the two principal sayings in which this is expressed, giving only so much of the narrative as is necessarily connected with these; Mark is able, again from good sources, vividly to paint the whole occurrence, and, besides, he preserves important words spoken by Christ in conversation with the father of the lunatic, as also at the healing of the latter; Luke alone adds at least the circumstance, that it was an only son.

The disciples, who remained below, should have cast out the devil in the absence of their Master, for to them in the meantime the demoniac had been brought; but they could not, although Luke has recorded at the beginning of the same chapter, that Christ had given them authority and power over all devils.[1]

[1] According to Lange, this loss of former power was "probably a consequence of the great depression, which the communication of Christ regarding his impending sufferings had produced in them."

This caused a pressing of the people around the poor disciples to their shame, a reasoning among the Scribes certainly not friendly to them, and thus the Master finds them when He returns to them! All the *people* are "struck with fear" at His presence suddenly appearing in these circumstances, they are moved with something more than accustomed reverence,[1] and hasten to Him, humbly saluting Him; it is hereby indicated, however, that the Scribes did not join with them. And He immediately begins by inquiring what is the matter, and where help is wanted. He *asked*—not the Scribes (which is a reading arising from a false interpretation), probably also not merely the people who ran to Him, but, as was very natural, *all in common*, including *his disciples* as the principal persons to whom he had come: *Why dispute ye with one another?*[2] What are you about, that I should find you in such commotion? But the ashamed disciples are silent, nor do the scribes think proper to acknowledge before the Master what they have been saying against the disciples. Instead of them, the man about whose case the question was, the agitated and sadly disappointed father of the possessed, takes up the word, and relates the case with a terrible description of the malady, and a melancholy charge against the disciples:—*they could not—they were not able.* The first answer of Christ, however, is a strongly vented word of grief, an accusation of unbelief against the whole race in common, into whose midst He must thus again enter; *this* word has very strikingly been preserved almost literally the same by all the three Evangelists.

This may be sufficiently explained also without supposing, as many do, an after-lustre of the transfiguration, What was proper for Moses was *beneath* the dignity of Christ; besides *here* the miraculous light was not meant as an after-lustre for the *people.*

[2] I do not retract this, although Alford has contradicted me, and I read Mark ix. 16 with many now: ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτούς (which here almost recurs to the αὐτούς and αὐτοῖς ver. 14, takes in, however, the ὄχλος named ver. 15)—as also with Rec. and several: συζητεῖτε πρὸς αὐτούς (Cod. A. ἑαυτούς). Quite naturally, inasmuch as all were gathered round the disciples when Christ came to them, he does not immediately single out the disciples alone (as Alford has misunderstood me), but puts them in this first address, as afterwards (ver. 16), together with the entire unbelieving generation. It is his first impression which here finds the expression: What have you sons of men already again found to dispute and be in distress about?

Ver. 17. An expression of holy impatience, to reach the goal which He had just been so near on the Mount! The vehement indignation of warm love, which seeks only *faith* to call forth the helping power and glory of God! (Luke ver. 43; John xi. 40). The inward grief of Him who was holy and righteous in the truth of God, for whom the perversity of men is so hard to *bear!* It is with Him a different zeal from that of Moses (Num. xx. 10), which was sinful, because it becomes no one who is himself a sinner to rebuke in his own might. *How long* shall I continue *with you*, labour almost in vain among you, who even yet do not *believe?* How long shall I still *suffer* you? Only He can speak thus who, as the holy One among sinners, bore the burden of all (Gal. vi. 2), and whose whole life was in the innermost sense, from the very first, a profound *suffering* through the feeling and enduring of sin. Thus according to the Father's counsel it was necessary in this word, which was drawn from the usually closed depths of His heart, immediately after the revelation of His glory, to manifest the glory also of His human endurance, the pain of divine love in His human nature, which was alike strongly susceptible of this on account of meekness and purity. If we had not this word, and that other in Luke xii. 50, we should want the true, entire insight into the self-denying, atoning nature even of His whole earthly course in our flesh and blood. What complainings, known only to the Father, does this single expression, which He neither can nor will restrain, presuppose? He takes, however this expression also of most immediately personal feeling—so entirely do all His thoughts continually move in the sphere of holy writ—directly from that first complaint of God against His people Deut. xxxii. 5, 20. (The Sept. has in the first of these verses γενεὰ σκολιὰ καὶ διεστραμμένη, in the second ἐξεστραμμένη). There also follows at ver. 20 οὐκ ἔστι πίστις ἐν αὐτοῖς as the right rendering of לֹא[1] אֱמוּן בָּם—this, however, Christ puts with emphasis before in His ἄπιστος. This rebuking complaint then applies again to *all in common*, to whom He has now come,[2] in whose *unbelief* He

[1] Which the more recent commentators without reason deny, see Is. xxvi. 2, 3, 4; Hab. ii. 4.

[2] In Mark ver. 19, αὐτοῖς and ὑμᾶς are connected exactly with ver. 16.

sees represented mankind, especially all Israel as it is, the perverse generation by nature and from of old; nay, the repetition of that word of the Spirit in the mouth of Christ already points beforehand to the rejection of this people on account of their unbelief, which is further prophesied of in Deut. xxxii. *First of all*, however, the words apply to the hastily judging people, as also to the scribes, who were malignantly rejoicing at the impotency of the disciples, *then*, in particular, to the father of the demoniac, as we shall immediately see, *finally*, also in no less measure to the disciples, who were bringing shame upon him below, when he was receiving honour above; they certainly deserve on this occasion to be classed with the multitude.[1] Still the rebuking complaint is by no means to be regarded as a repulse, implying that he now ceased to bear and to love (already in the ἕως πότε he represents himself as obediently waiting with patience), but with all the more effect on this account does the majestically brief command of the Helper follow: Bring *him* hither to Me, him who is in need of help! As in everything there is ever again the one thing: Bring him only to *Me!*

That which Matthew hastily sums up in ver. 18, in order to connect with it the other *word* concerning unbelief, is given by Mark in full detail. The evil spirit, at the look of Jesus, immediately raises the frightful paroxysm in the person who had been brought to Him. But without any trace or tincture of that horror which had restrained the faith of the disciples, with a calmness which is at the same time a feeling of deep sympathy with the wretchedness before Him, Christ looks on the tearing, rolling, and foaming, wisely delays the help in order that all who were agitated might be tranquillized and prepared for the salutary impression, and kindly asks the father how long it is since

[1] Schleiermacher finds such a reference to the disciples, although certainly unwarranted, yet, in the connection, very natural. (According to him the whole story of the transfiguration, and what belongs to it in Matthew has undergone "a transformation into something strange and odd, an unfortunate complication.") On the other hand, Neander will not at all admit that the "harsh rebuke" was intended for the weak apostles, whom on other occasions Christ treats so gently; they would not, in that case, he thinks, have asked him as afterwards follows. The word, according to him, was spoken *chiefly* to the father of the possessed, and with him to all who should at any time desire merely *bodily* help.

this happened to the poor boy; τοῦτο, with full and hearty sympathy and consideration—as much as to say, This is indeed very bad and melancholy! The father, as if it were necessary to keep up this sympathy, begins anew to describe the case in stronger terms than before, and as he before complained that the disciples could not help him, so now, in his anguish, he speaks very unbelievingly indeed (differently from the leper in Matt. viii. 2) the bold word: *But if thou canst do anything*, more than the disciples in thy name—help us, have compassion on us! This *us*, proceeding from paternal love, this cry for pity would in ordinary circumstances, notwithstanding of all the boldness of the *if*, have moved Christ immediately to say: Be whole. Now, however, his mind is so full of thoughts about faith and unbelief, that the bodily malady, bad as it is, falls into the background; He delays still the help which will certainly come, and must first speak and testify of faith. One feels the sublimity of this single interest and zeal with which Christ here speaks and acts, as opposed to the last impotent raging of the spirit that is to be cast out. The poor father almost doubts whether he can do anything; in the reply which he gives, Christ leads him into His own heart: If thou couldst *believe!* This is the principal thing—my power will then certainly show itself.[1] If he spake so doubtingly to Christ with his "If," with what doubts is he likely to have gone at first to the disciples, when the Master whom he wanted was not there. *His* faith could and must first of all do the most, as the son appears almost passively incapable; his *unbelief*, next to the power of the malady, had been to the disciples the obstacle that had put out their little spark of faith. He who does not believe can do nothing, and he who can, is yet not able to show the unbeliever anything within the sphere of the operations of this miraculous power of God over nature, and that, moreover against the power of hell. *But all things are possible to him that believeth!* Who needs an interpretation of this word in order to understand it? And who can fathom its immeasur-

[1] On the neuter τό, before entire clauses see Winer, § 20. Others construe: As regards this (that *thou saidst*): εἰ δύνασαι—know that all is possible, &c. (In which πιστεῦσαι must fall out as not genuine). Others again artificially construe, by reading the Imper. Mid. πίστευσαι, as if it meant: *That* εἰ δύνασαι only believe!

able depth of meaning, who can exhaust it in thought and feeling? Christ repeats the, *All things are possible* to the disciples, with a, *Nothing shall be impossible to you*, (ver. 20); we will speak of it when we come to that verse.

It is not our plan to interpret the words of men to Jesus, otherwise there would be much to say upon the ingenious exclamation of the man, (Mark ver. 24), which, amid all His unbelief, the Holy Ghost put into His lips, in order that afterwards it might have a place in the gospel for the instruction of the whole world. We only say here again, that we deeply pity any one who does not feel constrained to acknowledge such narratives and sayings, as Mark here gives, to be *unsearchable*, the origin of which was *possible* only as *facts* in the living conflict of the Son of God with the children of men. Where do we read the like? Where has the like been done? Into whose mind could such things come if they did not actually take place? Perhaps even yet Christ would have *spoken* further of faith and unbelief, but the press of the people around the person who was ill, and the talk about him, increased, and this at length moves Him (as Mark, exact even to the last feature, observes) to speak his word of power as helper, and, on account of the unbelief which was there, where faith must needs co-operate in order to the exertion of his power, he speaks here in a greater number of words than we have an example of anywhere else. He addresses the spirit at some length, puts his *I command thee* in opposition to the command of the disciples, which had been powerless, and which had made the devil so bold, and, in order to give the most perfect assurance to the father and son and all the hearers, he adds the command, which occurs only here, that it should depart from him for ever, never again to enter into him. What condescension here marks the work and faithfulness of Christ, in the regard which he shows to every circumstance! Now, the deaf spirit must hear the command addressed to him, now the evil spirit departs after venting his rage for the last time.

The disciples, however, have not yet heard aright the Master's word to the unbelieving generation, and, from their great slowness to hear, it has never occurred to them, at least not come home to them as the principal thing, to apply it also to themselves! This Matthew records of himself along with the others,

and lets us see, at the sametime, only by this, what he has nowhere expressly told us, namely, that the disciples, hitherto, from the time that Christ gave them power, *had been able* to cast out devils, and that the present was the first astonishing case of failure. Many and various may have been their thoughts and conjectures as to wherein the cause of this failure lay: too many spirits in the diseased person, or one that was too powerful for them? his own great sin, or that of his father? their own sinfulness? perhaps the dispute about precedency which had already been raised by the separation of the three disciples, and which soon came to light? or some other secret ban lay in the midst of them? The Master, however, says it, and comprises it in one word: *Because of your unbelief!*

Ver. 20. This is also a general and fundamental answer, brought to us from the Mount of Transfiguration, to all our inability both past and present. It is, at the sametime, a most friendly rebuke, as afterwards it is said of the Comforter, that he shall reprove the world of sin, in that they believe not. Three times, so far as we know, has Christ in almost the same words, attributed so great effects to *faith*, or rather this greatest one of all, that nothing is to be impossible to it; we find a repetition of it, not merely in Matth. xxi. 21, but also previous to this in Luke xvii. 6. When Christ spoke with the father of the demoniac, he disclosed his unbelief to him as the obstacle that stood in the way; now, however, he lays the blame on the disciples. Let each have his own! Let every one seek and find out his own sin! The disciples ought certainly to have been able with their strong faith to overcome even the unbelief of the man (because it was not complete unbelief), and to remove it as a mountain: this is evidently implied in the words of Christ. This is the first and only occasion (besides Mark xvi. 14; John xx. 27, after the resurrection), on which Christ so literally applies to the disciples this word of severe rebuke, "unbelief;" instead of this he usually, when reproving their unbelief, kindly addresses them by, "O ye of little faith!" The expression in Mark iv. 40, however, borders upon it: How is it that ye have no faith? Namely, now in readiness, as the other way of taking it runs: Where is your faith? Thus and no otherwise is here to be understood the expression "if *ye have* faith"—not merely if ye

possess faith in general, but if ye have it ready, and hold it fast for the moment when ye are called to use it, and to prove it. Then, however, all distinction between little and much, small and great faith, properly speaking, falls to the ground, the *smallest* measure of real, living power of faith, disturbed at the moment by no unbelief and doubt, is sufficient to accomplish the *greatest* things, just as a small spark actually burning kindles an entire ὕλη. For either, on the one hand, faith remains faith, or, on the other, unbelief remains unbelief! It is precisely *this mountain* before their eyes,—therefore does Christ take the similitude from it, and again speak biblically and proverbially at the same time. Mountains are obstacles which are to be removed out of the way, as Is xl. 4 out of the way of the coming Lord, Zech. iv. 7 the hindrances to the building of the temple. As with us it is quite common to say (although, since the period of railways, this expression has almost lost its force) that there is still many a hill to be surmounted, that one has not yet got over all the mountains in the way. Among the Jews an eloquent teacher is called עֹקֵר הָרִים, one who tears up mountains. This, now, Christ takes as a figure and example of any miraculously powerful effect of faith, when he immediately goes on to say in general: Mountains shall remove out of their place if ye bid them, all things will be obedient to what you say, *nothing will be impossible to you!*[1] to you even as to God (chap. xix. 26; Luke i. 37.) Thus does Christ put the omnipotence of God into our hand of faith. Thus he says to us that faith, because it lays hold on the omnipotence of God, can, in virtue of this, work miracles,—but how and to what purpose does he mean this? He speaks of the wonders of God's power in the sphere of external nature, in order to awaken and strengthen our faith in the miracles of grace wrought in the hearts of men.[2]

[1] Which ὑμῖν abundantly refutes that cunning refinement which timidly turns away from the words by reading the foregoing word in Mark ix. 23: Πάντα δυνατά omnia effici possunt, *a Deo scilicet* τῷ πιστεύοντι in usum confidentium!

[2] Others, indeed, less in harmony with the proverbial usage, are for finding an allusion to those passages where *mountains* are also kingdoms, powers of the world—nay "*this mountain*" (which, however,

He, in the first place, rebukes that unbelief, so deeply-rooted in man (since Satan's first lie which separated the world from God) and to this day so prevalent in Christendom, which looks upon nature with its objects and laws as if the supreme free will of the living God had not remained immanent in it from the creation onwards (Heb. xi. 3.) Not as the scoffers who, speaking scoffingly even of a *creation*, affirm *that all things remain as they were from the beginning of the creation.* As if the one original law of the power of freedom, of spirit and will, is not to be reckoned as a living, penetrating element in all "laws," and to be received as a never failing pre-supposition. God does as he will with the powers of heaven and of earth (Dan. iv. 32)—can still always make what he will, can create also something new in the old creation (Ps. cxv. 3; Num. xvi. 30.) Whatsoever He will, He does, in heaven and on the earth, in the sea and in all deep places (Ps. cxxxv. 6.) He *removes mountains* ere they are aware of it, moves the earth out of its place; speaks to the sun and it riseth not, and seals up the stars; He alone spreads out the heaven and walks on the waves of the sea. To this simplicity of Job (chap. ix. 5—8) must all the learning of natural science return in the spirit of a little child, if, as an idolatrous illusion, it would not rest in mediate causes, and in that which in itself is nothing. Nothing stands so fast, not even the granite of the original mountains,[1] as not to be subject every moment to the mighty hand of God; and this puts such power into the hand of our faith, into the word of our confidence: Ye shall point out to the mountain its place, saying ἐντεῦθεν ἐκεῖ, and it will obey! Nothing therefore is said at all, and one knows not of what one speaks, if these promised miracles in external nature are cast aside, and only the *similitude* left over; this were to forget the simple proposition, that every similitude must first be true and real in its substratum, in order that with this anything may

would not at all be suitable!) is said precisely to be the power of the heathen world—as elsewhere the fig-tree is Judaism! Evang. Kirchenz. 1847. p. 948.

[1] Not even the equilibrium of the heavenly bodies, which it is reckoned would compensate for all permanent disturbance (for example, in the solar system, balancing Jupiter by Saturn!)

reasonably be compared, otherwise the promise cancels itself, and becomes its opposite. If we might answer: But really to remove actual hills, this certainly cannot be, Lord—then would His word to us rather mean: It is equally impossible for your faith to remove many an obstacle! It is here, just as at Ezek. xxxvii., where, in the figurative resurrection, the literal must also be guaranteed, for otherwise the meaning and answer of the son of man to the question of God would be quite just: Lord, as little as these dead bones can become again alive, so little also can these dry bones of the house of Israel. We will not here relate and examine, as regards the actual removing of mountains, the sayings and stories to which Bengel alludes in his *Factum tamen est aliquando*;[1] that faith has wrought miracles in the outer world, and still sometimes works them, is disputed only by those fools who think that, with their unbelief, they can blow away all the *Facta* of history, and when such a work is wrought, it is at bottom all one whether it be a seed-corn or a mountain that miraculously gives place to faith. Finally, however, which is the more real and actual, the sphere of spirit, or that of *matter*, which latter *Heinroth*, for example, has declared to be an "hypothesis?" Which is more difficult (to speak with Christ truly in place of our folly Matth ix. 5), to remove a mountain, or to tear out a root of sin from the heart, to remove a σκάνδαλον of unbelief, so that faith may have free course, moreover, to show the way to the spirits of hell, who do not merely lie like the mountains in the place where God has created them? To create a new heart is more than to create a new heaven and new earth; when God shall have prepared His chosen ones by the work of thousands of years, He will then, by the word of His power, transform the earth for them, in one day. *In this* lies the reason why faith which can do all things has yet seldom (or perhaps never) removed mountains; for the same faith knows also that such things render no service to the kingdom of God, and it will work only for the kingdom of God. The difficult mountains for faith lie elsewhere, the greater miracles are the miracles of grace in

[1] Nor the lauded act of Father Rodinger in behalf of the holy Elizabeth of Marburgh, whose doubts he removed by transplanting trees (Luke xvii. 6) from one shore of the river to the other. (Sepp. iii. 241).

the heart of man. It is true, indeed, since even grace does not compel, that our faith also, however strong, cannot bid away the sin of another; but our own sin will yield to faith, which brings the omnipotence of God into its will, and our own faith can work much good, can overcome much opposing unbelief, can so suffer and love a whole unbelieving and perverse generation, that something may be made of it which can be made only thus. To this the word of Christ points, and gives us, in the bosom of a sharp rebuke, a most cheering consolation, inasmuch as He attributes such great power even to the small grain of mustard seed. It is our duty then when we have any faith, as it were by a second potency, to believe in the right and might of our faith,[1] not to let it fall aside, but by watching, praying, fasting, to keep the mustard seed in growth and exercise, so that, when the occasion comes, we may have faith to remove precisely *this* mountain which is now in our way, if only another unbelief do not keep it fixed by the root.

Ver. 21. Christ says two things in the *But* here, first, that He had meant the casting out of devils by the similitude of removing mountains, and, secondly, that to control spirits, to break the evil will, the wicked power in the kingdom of sin and of rebellion against the Almighty, who tolerates it according to the law of freedom, and even only thus removes it, is indeed another and greater thing than the simple working of miracles in helpless nature. *This* may perhaps be the deepest meaning of the expression *this kind*—this kind of mountains in the way, of things to be removed for the kingdom of God—or somewhat more nearly as a certain Bible glosses it: this kind of enemies of man, the devils. In so far we could not insist on maintaining precisely, that here (as at chap. xii. 45) Christ speaks of a particular kind of worse, or stronger devils; and yet, on the other hand, the ἐκπορεύεται seems to point to others which *go out* more easily, and we have nothing to say against its being so understood at the same time, so much the less that Mark gives *only* this word, which, by itself and without the foregoing antithesis, must be so understood. Probably the disciples

[1] As Trahndorff most recently (Der Welthistor. Zweifel p. 35, 39) concedes the victory only to this "faith in the power of faith."

also had been thinking of specially obstinate spirits; Christ then would in the second place confirm this thought of theirs, after having in the first place particularly spoken of unbelief. Instead of the strong and ever prepared faith, to which even the worse sort also must yield, he calls it now very significantly *praying* and *fasting*;[1] He thereby goes still a step deeper into the matter, and gives unasked an answer to the second question which the disciples should have put: Why, then, had we not our faith now, but unbelief? You have not carefully enough kept and exercised your faith. This is done by *prayer*; he who lives in prayer lives in faith, and if we are found praying in connexion with any work we have to do, it will then be seen how much the earnest prayer of faith can do. Finally, *fasting* is a help to prayer, sobriety and temperance in what pertains to the bodily life, the opposite of which can only strengthen the flesh against the spirit. Fasting, then, when joined with prayer, and used as a help to it, is also of great value; this Christ would not have to be forgotten, and He speaks it out on this opportunity, in order to put it as a counterpoise to the misunderstanding of what He had formerly said, chap. ix. 15. That which He says in the first place, of quite literal bodily fasting, may indeed be further understood of the *turning away* from the world and nature in general, which will assist in *turning to* God (prayer). Whether, as *Oetinger* thinks, the disciples in general or immediately before, to speak very plainly, "ate and drank too much" —we leave undetermined; that they, however, at all events deserved and needed this hint, is quite as certain as that we all have great reason to observe what Christ has here said, and diligently to apply the means here prescribed, when we have anything in hand that will not go so easily or so speedily as we would wish.

[1] Whereby he certainly does not mean, as rationalistic folly has perverted it: They should in future cause *such a diseased person* to pray and fast more!

SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUFFERINGS.

(Matth. xvii. 22, 23; Mark ix. 31; Luke ix. 44.)

This had already been said before the transfiguration (chap. xvi.), and is now repeated after it, stronger emphasis being laid in the repetition on the *killing* and *rising again* (Mark καὶ ἀποκτανθείς). It remains so; the μέλλει is not taken back, although I should still walk with you a while in Galilee. The new addition, which Luke alone therefore gives, at the beginning of ver. 44, is an echo of what Christ said to the three disciples (vers. 12, 13): The Son of Man shall be betrayed *into the hands of men*, that they may do to him likewise what they will, as they did to John. The hands of men, to whom the heavenly Son of Man is, notwithstanding of the likeness thus denoted, here opposed, as he was before to the whole unbelieving and perverse generation—are wicked hands, for their will and intention is wicked; this David already knew right well (1 Chron. xxii. 13).[1] But by whom is the παραδίδοσθαι performed? Who delivers Him up? Afterwards, at chap. xx. 18, 19, mention is made of His being delivered up to the Gentiles, which indeed is an important, and therefore also a predicted element in the sufferings of Christ; but there also this παραδώσουσιν is preceded by a παραδοθήσεται. There the traitor is specially included in the first delivering up (John vi. 64, xiii. 11, 21), here, however, all *men* are viewed as opposed to the παραδιδούς. Christ, therefore speaks here of the counsel of God (as Acts ii. 23; Rom. viii. 32), whose hand gives over His Son, as the Son of Man, to men from one hand to another, first to Judas, who delivers him up to the high priests, and these to the Gentiles and the unjust.

In Luke we have beforehand the words: *let these sayings sink down into your ears!* and v. Meyer's note, with which many agree, refers this to the foregoing: "This praise and testimony of God's miraculous power for your future confirmation"—for

[1] It would, however, be too harsh to say (Richter's House Bible), that in the term "man," Christ always presupposes what is worst.

you will need it when my sufferings begin. This, certainly, yields a good sense, but then there are no *words* of praise and astonishment at the μεγαλειότης τοῦ θεοῦ noticed, and therefore Luke could scarcely denote this by, *these sayings;* the expression appears to us rather to be parallel with the immediately following τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο, and is perhaps a resumption of ver. 28, the evangelist unconsciously taking up the expression there.[1] Only thus does the ὑμεῖς form a proper antithesis to the people, who are again intent on seeing outward signs of glory and power: Ye know better now what immediately awaits Me; let it sink, if not into your hearts, yet into your ears, hear and retain at least the λόγοι that have been already said and must ever again be said! (*For*, &c.) Consequently, it is just inversely as regards the foregoing interpretation: Forget not in your joy that I must suffer and die, so that you may continue humble, and not neglect prayer and fasting for the removal of the great mountains which still lie in the way to glory! The faith of Christ did not say to Golgotha, Be thou removed. His prayers and fastings did not cast the devil out of Judas, nor the devil Judas out of the circle of the apostles. He *endured* the cross, and thus removed out of the way the mountain of the world's sin and the world's guilt, so that now *salvation* is made possible to every one that *believes*. (Chap. xix. 25, 26). Thus ever and ever again does the word concerning the sufferings of Christ afford the true understanding, the true limitation and fulfilment, of all his other words; this is the purpose of God who delivers up the Son, the only key to all His ways, showing how, and how far, the sin which had its origin in freedom can, by His hand and the hand of men, be alone abolished in freedom.

[1] Hence Alford quite correctly understands it still more exactly as if it meant: these my, (for some time past,) repeated words to you about suffering and dying—you are forthwith to *hear again* that which you have almost forgotten, scarcely heard!

THE TRIBUTE PENNY AND STATER.

(Matth. xvii. 25—27.)

The seventeenth chapter is a principal chapter, quite complete in itself—not merely in the gospel of Matthew, but in the life of Christ himself. First, there is the transfiguration above on the heights of assured victory, obtained by faith, which already actually takes beforehand something from sight, the second sealing by the Father (John vi. 27), with the accordant testimony of Scripture and nature, of this and of the invisible world; the Son of Man standing upon the threshold between life and death, almost as if there were here no gates, and becoming conscious of the fact that in Him indeed is the life and the light of men: even here, however, the *μέλλει πάσχειν ὑπ' αὐτῶν* is confirmed and prepared. And now, in the contrast which is yet at the same time no contrast, we find the same Son of Man below carrying on His painful work against the power of death and the grave, bearing the burden of the unbelieving generation, which is laid on Him alone (Acts xiii. 18, *ἐτροφοφόρησεν*—Deut. xxxii. 11; Num. xi. 11, 12; Is. xlvi. 3, lxiii. 8, 9) to remove it in His faith; the word of His mouth, which also lifts the veil a little from the inner sanctuary, where this holy one of God prays and fasts in most willing, self-emptying love to sinners. Finally, in the third place, in order that this chapter may be complete, there is also a testimony to His *outward* subjection to law and tribute, although He is the free Son: how He turns even His kingly power only to the purpose of obedience, such as is proper to the subject![1] All these things in this connection are no *cunningly devised fables* invented by a gospel writer, no phantasmagoria of a dreaming Church which has been built upon no corner-stone, whose dreams (contrary to all psychology of the human race!) had produced unheard-of results in the actual

[1] The remark that Matthew alone, the former tax-gatherer, has preserved the account of the Stater goes to substitute what is merely human in the place of much deeper motives in the evangelist, for the connexion.

world up till then, and (contrary to all the history of the human race) had, in addition to this, transformed the actual word in the subsequent time, as is evident at this day in the Church which is not yet overcome by the gates of hell, in the kingdom which ever continues to come with power. Who then can with "reason," *i.e.*, at least, with consistency, deny the actual truth of these narratives and testimonies, except those to whom the whole history of the world and their own personal life has become a phantasmagoria, an illusion! But those people whom another has made so wise to choose Blocksberg[1] for Tabor,[2] should yet, if they thoroughly examine their own self-consciousness and that of the world, be afraid of the *future* weighty dreams of their poor souls, and should give a little more study to Hamlet's soliloquy. If they can make easy work of the first part, "To be, or not to be, that is the question" in the *idea*, still the *conscience* does not comprehend it; the fear of death (Heb. ii. 15), shows ever again only a sleeping instead of a not-being, and—"What in that sleep of death, for dreams may come"—*that is the question!* "Is it not thus," the Lord God asks also Cain. Oh ye poor ones who wilfully deny the *Redeemer* with *your feigned words* (2 Pet. ii. 3), which even now every breath of morning air that blows from the great day of the Lord into your souls, scatters like chaff before the wind!

Already from the profound connexion of the incident of the tribute money with the whole chapter to which it belongs, enough will appear to warrant our not calling this "the most difficult miraculous story in the gospel record," with a believing commentator who, in the love of his faith, inclined a little *too much* to the men of the idealistic school, and who now that he has gone to his rest, understands all better. We ask wherein lies this difficulty, if only we keep to that central point from which alone the entire life and labours of Jesus can be understood? Already Bengel, who for the exegesis of the Scripture must ever anew be revived, has expressed almost everthing in the words:

[1] Namely of the *Idealist* who quite correctly says: "In truth, if I am all that, then am I mad to-day!" Goethe's Faust is their Bible.

[2] We abide by the usual *name*, although Robinson has refuted it.

In medio actu submissionis emicat majestas; only we might still more aptly invert the expression: In the midst of the majesty, to which the fishes of the sea when it is necessary are subservient, submission maintains itself.

The tax which is here indicated by the article τὰ δίδραχμα as well-known to Jewish readers was certainly the half shekel of the temple tribute (2 Kings xii. 4; 2 Chron. xxiv. 6, 9; comp. Neh. x. 32), which had its origin Ex. xxx. 13, and was afterwards kept up.[1] Although the LXX, reckoning according to Alexandrine double drachms, put δίδραχμον for שֶׁקֶל (Gen. xxiii. 15, 16; Ex. xxi. 32, xxx. 13, 15, &c.), and for מַחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בֶּקַע מִשְׁקָל (Gen. xxiv. 22; Ex. xxxviii. 26), put δραχμή, nay at Gen. xxx. 13 ἥμισυ τοῦ διδράχμου, yet *Joseph.* (bell. jud. vii. 26), and *Philo* have the Attic reckoning as here, in like manner *Aquila* (Gen. xxxviii. 26), δίδραχμον. According to the Tract. שְׁקָלִים, the payment was not a thing of compulsion, but a voluntary work of legal piety; hence, the modest question of the tribute-gatherers here, which yet, at the same time, has something odious in it: Does *your Master* pay this tax? Or does He omit this, in the exercise of His well-known freedom?[2] They avoid the Master Himself, as they always do, and address them-

[1] True, indeed, even Wieseler recently understands the civil tax to the Roman Emperor, but we protest against this explanation. It greatly weakens the idea of the υἱός (vers. 25, 26), removes the equally clear and significant connection with the tranfiguration, and rejects the profound meaning lying precisely therein. We agree in this instance with Neander, who, in like manner against Wieseler, observes: "The entire significance of the account rests precisely on this, that it is no common political, but a Temple tax." When the Church fathers (Clemens, Origen, Augustine, Jerome), understand it of the Imperial tax they have thereby certainly missed the import of the entire incident—as the English writer Trench has, by a thorough investigation, made out. That Wieseler attempted "so forced an interpretation" as this only for the sake of his harmony has with truth been represented to him also in Tholuck's Litt. Anzeiger.

[2] Whether, according to Pirke Aboth. c. 4. §. 5, Rabbis were actually exempt from taxation, is uncertain, and as far as regards that period may rather be doubted from this account. Others think that, because Jesus had for a long time been away from Capernaum, this made the tribute-gatherer uncertain. Perhaps it may also (with Braune) be understood as if the question "Does your Master pay?" was nothing more than a *polite* way of asking payment.

selves to the spokesman Peter, who was settled in Capernaum, as Jesus himself was to a certain extent. Peter says, of course, Yes, because he knew what to say, from what had taken place on a former occasion, but his prompt answer is immediately followed by embarrassment, on finding that there is no money in the bag. For this is presupposed in the account, as otherwise Christ would not have devised means of providing in another way.

Christ foreknew all this, because it was ordained that he should now know it, in the Father's counsel, according to which the conclusion of the seventeenth chapter of Matthew was ordained to be just what it is, and not otherwise; he anticipates the embarrassed question with an explanation, which (to remove this mistake beforehand) is certainly not meant to find fault with Peter's Yes, as if it had been too rashly and inconsiderately spoken.[1] Such an idea seems to us to shift the entire meaning of the thing, and to be itself inconsiderate. What other answer should Peter have given than the historical truth which was known to him, and concerning which he was asked? Should he have said something to this effect: He has been in the general habit of paying, but whether he will do so on this occasion, I know not? Or, what he was *forbidden* to say: He is God's Son, and free from the temple tribute? Christ then does not mean this, nor is there in what he says the slightest censure of Peter. His question, *What thinkest thou, Simon?* also anticipates the thoughts of Simon only in this, that the latter might afterwards have deemed it to be strange, and, properly speaking, unjust that the Son of God should be put into embarrassment by this tax, paid by subjects to the house of his Father! These after-thoughts were quite as natural and right as the first answer; the προέφθασεν means in general that Christ, in all that he said, anticipated the thoughts of Peter, and

[1] Peter could and durst not on his part answer otherwise. It is mere trifling in Lange, when he makes this Yes of Peter, mistakenly described as "inconsiderate," to be typical again of the error of the Catholic Church, in fettering the freedom of Christ by the Temple-obligations of the old covenant! By such a mode of interpretation one may disguise the most natural things. Seeing that I myself, as is well-known, must bear to have a false penetration objected to me, I am all the more inclined and bound to protest wherever I really find the proper limit transgressed.

met these with a distinct solution of the difficulty. Christ, in order to demonstrate by general analogy the truth of the claim, according to which he would certainly be exempt from this tax, now compares the *great King* in Jerusalem, the God of Israel, with *the kings of the earth*, into whose ranks he has actually entered by the theocratical constitution. The kings of *the earth* take neither τέλη (of things,) nor κῆνσον (of the person,) neither tax nor custom of any kind whatever, from the princes, their own sons—thus says the heavenly one, over whom the voice from heaven bore testimony shortly before that *He is the Son.* Peter, when again asked, must give an answer which is quite right, and yet contradicts his former Yes. Christ first brings this contradiction between His right and His conduct into full prominence in the expressed inference: Then are *the children*, properly the *sons*, free. Was the half shekel originally a ransom for the person, אִישׁ כֹּפֶר נַפְשׁוֹ, as afterwards, at ver. 27, *ἀντί* indicates, it follows that the Redeemer himself was as free from this, as from Luke ii. 23. But that in the application of what he has said he still retains the *plural*, which before was quite proper, instead of saying, Then am *I* as the Son of God, free—in this lies one of the most striking expressions of condescension which he ever made. The paying of tribute being in itself something outward, belonging to this world, he might, indeed, as he was ever ready to do in such cases, rank himself along with them: That *we* may not offend, give it *for me and thee.* But here the external closely and profoundly borders upon the internal, and even here he assigns at the same time to his disciples as *sons* the right of *freedom*, which yet belongs to him alone as the Son! He says this with the same prospective glance, as we find at Mark ii. 27, 28, the Son of Man brings to all men in him, new freedom and dominion; see our earlier interpretation at Matth. xii. 8. He kindly looks forward and sees, as in Simon the future Peter, so in his disciples and the members of his family collectively, the future sons of God, and as is indeed right, predicates of them on account of their calling, the same claim which he in person inalienably possesses.

Christ might have borrowed or begged the stater from many a one to whom it would have been the greatest honour and joy to give it to him, but *this* certainly would not have been consistent

with what is due to the honour of the Son, who might indeed *accept* such gifts of love for his earthly wants, but not *ask* them.[1] Then must *Peter*, as *fisher*, render service, in order to fetch what was needed from God's treasury, and, by an act quite in the way of his calling as a fisher, learn how this treasury stands ever open to the faith of God's children. A miracle, in many respects great, is performed in a small thing, on account of the great significance belonging to it. With a foreknowledge, which is at the sametime more than foreknowledge, the assurance namely that it has been ordained and commanded in the Father's counsel and might, Christ says everything to Simon beforehand ere it takes place. He will immediately catch something with his hook, the first fish will bring money—and that in its dumb, but here loudly-speaking mouth (Job. xii. 8)—finally, just so much as is necessary for the moment, neither more nor less, a stater or 4 drachms.[2] *The same* take,[3] and give to *them*, the tax-gatherers, who are asking it, *for Me and thee*. Thus does Christ separate again the *we* who had just been united, not without a hint that it

[1] He could say to no one: Be so good as *give* the tax *for Me!* The remark of Hess, however, reaches somewhat too far: "It appears, He would in this case on purpose not pay the temple-tax with another's money"—if by this is to be understood: Not even with the contributions of His followers that were then in the purse. Whence, then, did He pay before? There was therefore at that time certainly nothing in the purse.

[2] In Stilling's Heimweh is related how the fish snatched away the shining piece of money dropped by a man on the shore, and as being too large to swallow, had kept it in its throat until Peter soon after came with the hook. Thus must some one have lost it, for the service of the Master. This is possible, but not necessary, and it is better not to add any stories of ours to that which is given us, by going farther back into the depths of the sea.

[3] Observe here, Christ says, Take the *stater*, and not the *fish*, which yet Lange makes Peter to have brought to the tax-gatherers as payment in natura (worth a stater), after having opened its mouth, *i.e.*, in *poetical expression*, loosened it from the hook! Lange thinks at least that the apostle at all events delivered what was required to the tax-gatherers in a miraculous form—either that he gave the fish as caught at Christ's word, or that he related to them the miracle with the money. We think, however, that the testimony of the power of Jesus here belonged only to the disciples and not at all to the tax-gatherers; otherwise we should lose the principal point of the whole, namely, the humility that would not offend.

was a condescension. For the others no payment is to be made in Capernaum, because the tax was gathered from every one only in the place where he lived; according to the symbolical sense, however, Peter is the representative of all for whom Christ Himself pays, inasmuch is He bids them pay in His fellowship and as His followers.

We now return to what was said at the beginning. Even the miraculous power which proves his dignity and freedom as a Son, He makes use of in a way of humble self-denial. And wherefore? *But that we may not offend!* Hear, hear ye proud ones among the disciples of the lowly one, ye champions of faith who are apt to forget the love, ye quakers with the hat of self-will upon your head, to whom, with all their good intention, the true Spirit has not yet shown the true relation of Christ and His New Testament theocracy to the kingdoms of this world! True, if ye are sons in the Son, ye are all *free*—free however, not *from*, but *to*, the fulfilling of all righteousness. Consider, moreover, that the *kings of the earth* do not know you as such, in your heavenly sonship, that ye are rather to abide here as *strangers*—and give no offence. Child of God in the faith which removes mountains, use this thy very power as a son in the humility of faith, by submission to the hands of men. Thou should'st sooner and rather procure by thy faith the tribute pence, than needlessly remove the mountains out of the way; rather work a miracle *for this* than give any *offence* by thy power and freedom, laying down *σκάνδαλα* instead of removing them.

THE TRUE GREATNESS OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST. THE POWER OF THE CHURCH TO BIND AND TO LOOSE.

(Matth. xviii. 3—28. Mark ix, 33—50. Luke ix. 48—50).

It is self-evident that *ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρα* is not literally to be strained, as expressing immediate connexion, but (although it is certainly more than merely *ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ*) leaves room, at all events, for the return of Peter from procuring the tribute money; for afterwards (ver. 21), he is present, and has heard everything along with the rest. The dispute as to

precedency had already broken out before on the way to Capernaum, while, in addition to the internal grounds for such questioning, which already lay of necessity in the thoughts and inquiries of the disciples respecting the mysterious advent of the *kingdom of heaven*, and their personal position in that kingdom, outward occasions also had now come in rapid succession (chap. xvi. 19, 28; xvii. 1). Whether Peter was destined to occupy a place above the others, and what that was, what besides was meant by Christ in the repeated separation of the three disciples from the twelve—this was more directly interesting and important to them than the dying and rising again of the Son of Man! At least their thoughts soon turn from the one to the other, and only the latter gives rise to a warm and lengthy discussion, because it concerns *their* persons. The question in dispute, which Matth. states in the uncaptiously general form τίς ἄρα μείζων ἐστίν, has yet another personal motive lying behind it: Which of *us* shall receive special precedence, and the place of honour (chap. xxi. 21), or rather *is* already destined to this by Christ?[1] Mark, with his more concise τίς μείζων, expresses this in his connection still more strongly. Luke most distinctly τὸ, τίς ἂν εἴη μείζων αὐτῶν—*i.e.*, of course not greater than them, but which *of us* shall be *greater than the rest* (comp. Luke xxii. 24.) Not, however, altogether, as Winer also understands this passage: that they were thinking of a single *major ceteris* or *princeps* (as in other places the comparative is thus put for the superlative Matth. xiii. 32 μεῖζον τῶν λαχάνων), they were rather thinking, as the occasion led them to do, of several who might receive precedence; although Christ afterwards, in his answer, very strikingly makes a proper superlative of it, in order to place in opposition to it His μικρότερος ἐν πᾶσιν. That Peter was not the speaker on this occasion we take to be quite as natural as that he afterwards again comes prominently forward (Matth.

[1] Of course, as the clause "in the kingdom of heaven" clearly shows, the entire question refers to the *future* position, by no means only (as Neander says): who among them is now already by zeal in the service of Christ, in virtue of his personal qualities and services the greater? The disciples will certainly anticipate the future a little—so much is true in this; but that only present worthiness qualifies for the kingdom of heaven—this is precisely what the answer of Christ opens up to them.

ver. 21; properly considered, however, the προσῆλθον λέγοντες of Matth. is to be taken not literally but in the higher truth, according to the manner of this evangelist in other places (comp. chap. v. 5, 6), for according to Mark Christ *asked* what they had been disputing about on the way, *but they held their peace*, being ashamed. Or must we suppose that they *afterwards* spoke out? *This mode* of reconciling the evangelists can hardly be the right one, and might rather impair the truth as well of Matthew's as of Mark's account.[1] What Luke, in an expression intermediate between the two, says: ἰδὼν τὸν διαλογισμὸν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν—rightly shows, that Matth. has concisely represented the silent confession of the disciples before him who knew their thoughts, as a λέγειν, in instructive contradiction to our registering exactness in regard to what is merely external.

We have now, however, in the first place again to show, that the whole answer of Christ, which Matthew gives without interruption on to ver. 20, was actually spoken by him ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ, and that nothing foreign is added from any other place. That is, not that no pause, interruption, or digression may have taken place, for Mark and Luke have introduced in the course of it the question of John respecting the exorcist in the name of Jesus, who had not been called, and several other sayings of Christ; but that Christ actually at that time spake all this in close succession. As Christ does not let Himself be driven by those digressions from pursuing the course of His thoughts, until the question of the disciples has been completely answered and despatched, so also does Matthew here, as it were, not let himself be hindered from laying before us in one whole the profound and grand connexion of his words spoken upon this occasion. We will therefore here also do him right, and reserve the consideration of the sayings in Mark and Luke, although they are historically parallel, for our commentary on these places. We also leave aside, in the mean time, the immediately following parable addressed to Peter (although Matthew includes it, chap.

[1] In which case Roos, for example, is for bringing out, that the subsequent question was put in a more generalized, less faulty form, than the first dispute, "who *among them* is the greatest!" We think that this "among them" is self-evident also in Matthew and Mark. Mark (πρὸς ἀλλήλους.)

xix. 1, rightly in the *these sayings*) as a corollary, which it only is in reality, and look only at the profound connexion in which Christ, according to Matth. v. 3—20, gives answer and instruction *as to the true greatness of His disciples in relation to one another.* This is and remains truly the grand theme, the leading idea, which everything follows in consecutive order.

Christ does not satisfy Himself with saying what lay on the surface as the most immediate answer, namely, *wherein* this true greatness of His disciples *consists*, but takes a deeper and wider view of it, and discusses the important point thus raised so completely for His disciples in all future time, that He shows besides *whereon it is founded*, and finally, *how it expresses itself.* These are the three principal parts of the whole. It consists in humility first of all, but at the same time also in the *love* which naturally flows from humility, and is given with it, which despises or neglects no other person as *little.* (Whereby, already at the beginning, the foundation is laid for the inference which points out the expression of such love.) In *humility:* without which no one can in any wise be a disciple, can in any wise enter into the kingdom of heaven, or belong to it (ver. 3)—with which *every* humble disciple stands on one and the same level of greatness (ver. 4). In *love:* which here is positively a δέχεσθαι, an acknowledging, helping, reception of every other little one, as standing on the same level with myself (ver. 5)—negatively, a *not offending* (ver. 6). This latter (because, as we shall see occasion was given for this in the circumstances,) is farther carried out in an emphatic admonition respecting offences: the "Wo to the world!" begins from without (ver. 7)—what is said as to the unavoidableness and yet the criminality of offences goes deeper into the thing (ver. 7)—and finally, the way pointed out to self-denial, to the slaying of inward offences in themselves, completes the information for the disciples if they would not fall into the "Wo to the world!" and "Wo to the man!" (ver. 8, 9). For this is the only way by which the disciples of Jesus can attain to, or maintain humility, which in relation to others becomes love; thus alone is offence avoided and destroyed in the root.

But after Christ has thus represented the matter to His disciples in so severe and difficult a light, after He has thus plainly

shewn them that the return to a childlike state here required of them is truly no child's play, but can be attained only by the manliest internal struggles with the members of the old man, which unhappily have already grown strong—He does not stop here, but comforts them again by kindly opening up to them, how the greatness of the little ones, whom we are not to despise and offend but love (consequently, which also lies behind this: the loving patience of Christ towards the other little ones, who, alas! as yet offend in their weakness), *is founded* on the great *salvation through the Son of Man.* If already, at ver. 5, preparing the way for this, it was said that a little child is to be so highly esteemed *because Christ is in him*—Christ now first, at ver. 10, comprises it in one weighty and mysterious proposition: the greatness of the little ones (*i.e.*, as the interpretation will show, the dignity of those who are as yet indeed weak, but who are, precisely on this account, disciples of child-like humility), rests on this, that *they are highly honoured before God.* And wherefore, whence is this? The more particular development of this follows immediately: *For* the Son of Man is come to save the children of men (ver. 11)! To this literal statement is added the parable of the seeking love of the shepherd (ver. 12 13), a parable which puts to shame every proud thought that goes against the love of Christ, and which exhorts to the imitation of His example in *going forth* to seek others. Then follows, in conclusion, as the highest step in the ascent, the gracious good pleasure of the *Father* towards the little ones (ver. 14). In this love of the Father, manifested in the redeeming Son, must the genuine humility and love of all his genuine children be *founded,* and must seek to know nought else but this: I myself am not lost only from such love, and no other must be lost from my want of love.

Christ might now have stopped here, but He has yet more to say. The dispute of the twelve about precedence has again opened up to His inner view the entire future of His Church, which is to proceed from these disciples. It is natural that He should specially refer this dispute to that word which was given to Peter before the others (chap. xvi. 18, 19), in order now, at the same time, to exhibit its true meaning in opposition to any misunderstanding of it. Accordingly, in order to thoroughly exhaust this theme, so as to be understood in all future time, He

shows how *one day* the greatness of His disciples (according to which there is no μείζων prae ceteris, but only a common rivalry of love on the part of every little one who will be great *in Christ*, towards every other little one who also belongs to Christ), how this greatness *should and will express itself* in the *fellowship* of all the redeemed who believe on Him. If the two first parts of the discourse spoke of individuals, we have now, in the third part, a term expressive of union; hitherto it has been, παιδίον τοῦτο, ὃς ἐάν, τοιοῦτον ἕν, εἷς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων—now, however, it is ἀδελφός, now the children are represented as brothers and sisters in the household of God, who, in their intercourse with one another, are neither to give nor to take offence, but in the power of Christ, who is with them and in them, to manifest the love that seeks and saves. If the second part contained a *retrospective glance* at the first and innermost ground of all this new order of love and humility, which is henceforward to be the true order of precedence (the "house-law of humility" for the family of God), at the coming of the Son of Man into the world for its salvation—there follows now, on the other hand, a *prospective glance* at the future state of His kingdom. The true greatness of the disciples of Christ expresses itself in the *unity* and *power* of His Church, unity, namely, in the *love*, and power in the *truth* of God (which latter will certainly not be wanting in genuine love). The unity of love is, according to the connexion with what goes before, necessarily represented in the well-regulated *conduct* of the individual, as a member of the Church, in the *case of offences*, (ver. 15, 17). It shows itself, in the first place, always as unity of *love*, in the censure of the brother who sins, which is to be administered in a manner equally sparing, and seeking, by successive steps, so as to remove the offence; but if the sin yields not to love, it must certainly become also unity in the *truth*, inasmuch as the Church (not the individual!) at last excludes, and meanwhile drives out the impenitent person from its pale. This, again, as the transition to what follows:—The Church has *power* in Christ who has invested it with His own power! What it does upon earth in the name of Christ, that does Christ in it as being also valid in heaven, and this is finally the true common greatness reaching to heaven of the united disciples of Christ, in which even every μείζονες of the twelve disappears,

and, therefore, certainly every precedence of any kind on the part of a Peter, John, and James. Ver. 18—20 speaks of the power of the Church, so as that the *power* first comes into prominence, and then in the conclusion, which points backwards, it is declared what and where this *Church* is. It is a power (and the way was prepared for this by what goes before), to *bind* also with judgment, as to loose with forgiveness (with friendly rebuke which aims at forgiveness and reconciliation), therefore, the severe power of *truth;* in and along with all this, however, it is a power to *pray*, the more excellent power of unceasing *love*, which with its faith penetrates into the love and gifts of the heavenly Father. And, finally, who has this power? The *Church!* Where is the Church? Wherever there is a living part of its great whole, an out-going of its unity, which cannot be separated by place or by number, where even two or three are met together in the name of Jesus! And the ground? Because *He himself* is among them and in them, as already in every individual little one who believes on him, ver. 5.

Vers. 2, 3. All heathen antiquity *knew* almost nothing of the dignity and honour of *humility*, could not even find a word which clearly expresses this; the Roman *modestia* does not suffice for this, while the Greek ταπεινόφρων, ταπεινοφροσύνη only struggles to free itself from censure, so as to be regarded as praiseworthy.[1] In the *Holy Scriptures* of the Old Testament alone do we find preparatory intimations of that which the first great ταπεινῶν ἑαυτόν can alone fully express. He, however, speaks the new great word as simply and unpretendingly as if it had always been self-evident. Every child had spoken it, and shown it to those who were grown up, a presentiment of it lay certainly in every *puero debeter reverentia* that found expression, in every unexpressed receptivity for child-like feeling and child-like ways; yet this presentiment in all its forms waited until *Jesus* placed the child in the midst, and with His word unloosed that word which assigns its due praise to humility, and which had hitherto

[1] Tholuck cites from Plutarch (de profectibus in virtute, cap. 10) "one of those few passages where ταπεινός stands in an honourable signification," and compares Plato de legg. lib. iv. p. 15. Bipont.

been fast bound by pride in the breast of man. In this most profound and general reference of his doctrine to the symbol of it and prophetic testimony to it, as yet present in man, lies the deepest reason why Christ here does not speak but *show*; by no means merely with the purpose (with which the most superficial view is wont to stop short) of vividly impressing his disciples, then present, with a lasting memorial of this important lesson. This child still stands ever in the midst of us, where we see it, and now looking on it, think of the words of the master! That there was at that time a child near at hand, had been provided for by the Father for this occasion. Christ called it to him—consequently it could already understand a call, and could walk; he not merely placed it in the midst, but took it up also in his arms (according to Mark), in order to give expression by action to his love for such little ones—it was, therefore, certainly as yet a *παιδίον* of tender age. At all events it was no ill-bred child, not one that would not come on being called, that cried or made resistance, not one that stood still when the strange, friendly man called, but a genuine, true *child*, such as is meant by the word.[1] Christ, indeed, as Mark pourtrays the scene, had first *sat down*, as it were on the seat of judgment, for the solemn determination of this certainly most important question, had called to him the council of the twelve, to whom now a grand fundamental principle of the kingdom is to be opened up in presence of the rest of the people who stood by, both great and small, as we see from the child being there,[2] and then, (after having given expression to another word against the *θέλειν πρῶτος εἶναι*) He forcibly and unexpectedly puts them all to shame by this little child before all the bystanders, and yet in such a way, as could only appeal with amiable truth to the pure human feeling. What a majesty of love and truth in *this*, Verily I say unto you! *As children*—He thereby says, at the same time, that it is not the child personally that is meant, but that it only stands there as a child in general.

[1] Which, moreover, received no injury or offence from being thus set up before others—so that Weisse might spare the objection: against such conduct of Jesus an intelligent pedagogue would have much to say!!

[2] So that Nitzsch not quite exactly says, only his disciples were present.

Ye should, all of you, *be children*, who, properly speaking, know nothing either of comparative or of superlative in their innocently positive existence, who have no questioning one with another as to *who shall be greater* in their paradise and kingdom of heaven; but if, unhappily, ye are otherwise—then must ye now *be converted*, and again *become* so! You *apostles* also, even you, if, and because, ye would be the greater! That they themselves, the twelve, were chosen to something special in the kingdom of heaven was, not indeed without reason, a settled matter with them beforehand; the question therefore now was, who among them is greater. But here Christ cuts away that first ground from beneath their feet, and plainly announces to them: If ye do not become quite different from, quite the reverse of, what ye have now shown yourselves to be, ye shall *not at all* (οὐ μὴ) enter into the kingdom of heaven. A terribly unexpected word for these servants of the kingdom, who had thought such a thing as this next to impossible, who had learned hitherto with their Lord to use the word "*in the kingdom of heaven*" as a great thing already done and determined for them! What is of the first importance is, to *enter into* that kingdom; that is already a great thing, nay the alone great thing without distinction, which is reserved only for the humble. To be called an apostle, and not to be in the kingdom of heaven? We know well that this alas! turned out to be true in one of the disciples.

Here the natural understanding in us all is ready to revolt—here the blind folly of the proud takes offence: Is this then what is called *advancing* and becoming something, if one must *turn round*, go backwards, and become a little child? But whoever puts the question of Nicodemus to the Master πῶς δύναται, has already the answer just such as He there gave it, namely, that He does not mean here certainly a literal turning back and beginning anew in the bodily sense, but a being born again of the Spirit to a new, spiritual, and truly child-like state which even children have not, properly speaking, in respect of their bodily age, but only show it in the figure: ὡς τὰ παιδία. Although the entire anology between this requirement of Christ and that which has respect to the *new birth* retains its essential truth (for στραφῆτε does not merely stand adverbially related to γένησθε as שׁוּב, but expresses beforehand more than this, and contains

the proper leading idea)—yet, along with the strictness, there is something comforting in the expression "as children," and in the "*become*," which leaves much time for patience. God trains His children to be small as we do ours to be great, and the growth of the internal man is a continual growing downwards to this humility and simplicity. Christ here again calls to mind the τέκνα and νήπιοι (chap. xi. 19—25), which ought, indeed, already to have occurred to Peter at chap. xvi. 17. What is the *tertium comparationis* for this *as*, on which it all hinges? Scarcely can it be altogether expressed by any other single word than just *childlike*, yet there are two principal ideas which directly after appear prominently in the words of Christ himself, and which point to all that is implied in that expression, namely, *humility*, in which a man humbles himself (ver. 4), and then, (what is implied therein), *trust* on the part of those who believe on him (ver. 6.)[1] "As this child,"—only look at it, and observe how it has now shown itself, and stands before your eyes. A child is called, and comes; is placed, and lets itself be placed; is embraced, and lets itself be embraced; it follows, obeys, receives, (Mark x. 15), mistrusts not, resists not, is prepared and tractable for every one greater than itself, just because it knows this: I am a child, and that is a friendly man! Such *humble trust* in receiving and obeying, such simple yielding up of ourselves to the love and power of God, which embraces us in Christ, and seeks to lift us up from earth to heaven—such is the child-like state which conducts into the kingdom of heaven. "As a child always believes itself to be safe when it has laid itself in its mother's lap, or when the mother holds out her hand to it"—so it is with the child-like faith in the gracious word of the heavenly Father, revealed in His Son.

Ver. 4. The general principle is now repeated with a view to its application to the individual. *Every one* who has become like such a child, is always, in relation to others, and in proportion as this is wanting in them, *the greater* and greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Here Christ actually makes a superlative of the com-

[1] Roos: "Wherein consists the lowliness of a child? Therein, that it allows itself to be taught, guided, led, and cared for, &c." To the same effect, Jul. Müller: "These sayings point to the ingenuous trust and inward capacity of union in the childlike spirit."

parative, but immediately again cancels it by ὅστις, in order without distinction to attribute the same greatness to every humble one. (Hence in Luke οὗτος ἔσται μέγας.) Erasmus is excellent here: *Quisquis* igitur demiserit semetipsum, hic est *ille maximus* in regno coelorum. In like manner he is equally striking in bringing out a delicate shade of the thought not to be overlooked, which the original text does not express: demiserit semetipsum, sicut *est* puer iste; for, taken strictly, this child needed not to *humble itself*, so as to be converted and become as a child; it is so already, and Christ can only have meant to say: He who humbles himself to *become* (in a higher sense) such as this child is.[1] Happy he in whom this is fulfilled, so that Christ may set him, on account of his humility, before others, with the testimony and commendation: Ye must become as this child-like person who is the great one before me! But whence and wherefore this greatness of the little ones? Truly only from the goodness and grace of him, who takes such a child in his arms and blesses it, who alone exalts those who humble themselves (chap. xxiii. 12), who imparts himself and his highest glory, won by the deepest humiliation, to all his believing followers. This is said in what immediately follows.

Ver. 5. The connection with what goes before is twofold, so that the discourse, which is in the utmost degree compressed, already begins something new, while it finishes what goes before. The little one who altogether unassumingly yields himself up to me, is and becomes great, for I bend myself down to him, and turn in to him. This important leading point, here indicated (as a glance forward to the second principal part vers. 10—14), being as it were the still hidden key for the solution of the enigmatic saying respecting the *greatness of the little ones*,[2] is, however, only expressed as the ground of a second discourse, in which a further advance is made. The first was: Whosoever shall himself be as this child! Now, the other is: Whosoever receives such a child! There can be

[1] Already Laur. Valla: iste parvulus non se humiliat, sed humilis est.

[2] For Christ maintains not merely at first, ver. 3, that humility, consciousness of our own littleness, poverty, and impotence is the condition of *entering* into the kingdom of heaven, but he goes on to say, (ver. 4), that always every one who humbles himself, is and remains the greater in the kingdom of heaven.

no question that Christ now, in the first τοιοῦτον (after τὰ παιδία and τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο), passes from the figure to its application, from children to childlike *men;* comp. afterwards chap. xix. 14, τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων. Certainly not merely: *such* a child as this well-behaved one here, for oftentimes even children are at an early age corrupted; but, now onwards, Christ means *his disciples*, if and in so far as they resemble children, and may even be so called, as, at ver. 6, the evident explanation follows. The *little ones* who believe on him are the same as those of whom he spoke chap. x. 40, 2, all the more certainly, that the promise to him who *receives* such *(he receiveth me)* is only a repetition of what is there said, and this repetition according to Mark, v. 41, and Luke, 48, was expressed still more fully. If, at ver. 6, the offending follows as the direct antithesis to the receiving (ὃς ἐὰν, ὃς δ'ἂν), then Christ certainly uses the two expressions *such children* and *such little ones as believe on me*, synonymously. Those commentators, however, on the other hand, who exclude *children* in the proper sense, are not less erring than those who understand them alone; for the full and true sense of what Christ thus expresses comprehends both in one: such as are truly childlike children are in reality the first among the "children of God," and heirs of the kingdom of heaven (otherwise there would be no ground for the application, Mark x. 14). Hence also Luke, ver. 48, although not exactly, yet not wrongly, has put τοῦτο τὸ παιδίον. The whole of what is said in vers. 5 and 6 as also vers. 20, 11, 14 in Matthew is, at the same time, rightly to be understood and used of the little child, although the *fides implicita* of baptised children is not, as some have confidently maintained, to be demonstrated from ver. 6.

One child receives another, and makes no evil distinctions, of which in its simplicity it knows nothing; *humility* uprightly honours its equal; he who is little in his own eyes esteems the little one beside him as worthy of the acknowledgement that he should do to him as to himself—consequently as worthy of *love*. To *take up* or receive is the opposite of proud rejection, of unloving neglect, it is precisely as the προσλαμβάνεσθαι, (Rom. xv. 7), to love, to do good to, as we also say, *to interest oneself in any one* (literally to receive any one to oneself). Comp. again Mark ix. 41, where the doing a kindness to a

disciple, which is expressed in terms taken from Matth. x. 42, forms the same antithesis to *σκανδαλίζειν*, as here the *δέχεσθαι*. The *ἔσχατος*, Mark ver. 35, corresponds to the *παιδίον τοιοῦτον ἕν* of Matthew, the *διάκονος εἶναι* to the *δέχεσθαι*. Now Christ says, promising in quite a general form: *Whoso* from his own humility despises not one of my children, one of those who believe on me, be he even the lowest and least whom one might easily despise, but lovingly receives him *for my name's sake*, because I have received him, and because I will that he be received! This *whoso* is then in the first place to be applied to those who are as yet standing without, to whom, however, Christ Himself now comes in him who is to be received, and receives them also into the kingdom of heaven, inasmuch as he is received by them. A spiritual child has in a certain sense quite as much, nay more, that is fitted to awaken favour and to call forth love than a child in the bodily sense. Whoso is capable of perceiving this, and acknowledging it in action, thereby proves himself to be equally childlike and worthy of the kingdom of heaven. Whoso brings himself down to the lowly, humbly receives the humble, becomes by the very act one of them: thus the door of the kingdom of heaven stands wide open for those who love (chap. xxv. 40), as, in the first *ὅστις οὖν* (ver. 4), for those who are humble. So much the more does it *follow* as a matter of course, that one child of God should receive another, that one who is already in the kingdom of heaven should receive all who enter by the right door. Since *every one* who is least is at the same time the greatest, why should not every one prove his humility in love towards every other, and hold him in respect as in the place of Christ?

Ver. 6. Between vers. 5 and 6 now comes, according to Mark and Luke, the question of John respecting the unknown disciple who did not as yet belong to the fellowship of Christ's followers, who, notwithstanding, cast out devils in the name of Jesus, and whom the apostles had forbidden to do so. To this then, at the same time, the warning of Christ refers: Whoso shall offend, hurt, despise, not acknowledge, one of those who believe on me, in his retired and separate faith as a beginner, does what is wrong. This, however, is by no means the sole reference, but only one which comes unsought for in addition to the other. Matthew rightly lets Christ proceed, without giving this incident as the occasion

of His words, for even without this occasion He would actually have continued His discourse in the connexion of the principal thoughts such as we have noticed above. And even although precisely at the moment no such offence had occurred, Christ might, and must indeed, following out the antithesis, warn against it; but an offence had actually already occurred, inasmuch as (according to Mark ver. 35, ἐφώνησε τοὺς δώδεκα), besides the little child whom he called to him (which can hardly have been there alone), there were others standing by, other disciples also, and beginners in the faith, with respect to whom the warm dispute of the twelve must certainly have caused an offence. These others, over whom the disciples exalted themselves, and yet at the same time set a bad example before them, Christ in his wisdom indirectly permits to hear his whole discourse to the apostles, and he compensates for the offence by placing the little child between the two parties—this is to be carefully observed, in order again to mark the tenderness of his manner of acting, which is always suitable to the occasion.

We are to offend no believer, the *little one* or *neophyte* all the less, that he is the most easily offended and hurt. *Whoso* does this—again, first of all, one who still belongs to the world without, a proud and unloving one, who has no mind to acknowledge the little ones in the kingdom of heaven, who are yet the great ones. In so far *this* offending forms the contrast to that word in chap. xvii. 27, according to which the children of God are not to offend the world. If, however, Christ meant this alone, then he would again have added, *for my name's sake*, for this would most directly express the ground upon which the world offends those who believe. But the words, *who believe on me*, which are added instead, include the still heavier offence of those who themselves believe, and who ought, therefore, certainly to acknowledge the faith of every other *little one*, to despise and offend no fellow-believer. Wo to him who gives offence! This Christ expresses, first of all,—before he once and again literally utters it,—by a proverb which describes one of the rarest forms of capital punishment, namely the καταποντίζεσθαι, or being drowned, as it was practised among the heathen, and hence probably had, in Galilee, given rise to a proverb. Christ will speak very strongly and emphatically, he therefore represents the prover-

bial case in the strongest form; not merely by πελάγει τῆς θαλάσσης (πέλαγος the main sea, the middle where the sea is deep, as opposed to the shallower water near the shore, Acts xxvii. 4, 5), but in addition to this by the very concrete expression μύλος ὀνικός. According to the ancient custom, which extended even to more modern times, (comp. Wetstein on this) a weight—most naturally a stone (Jer. li. 63)—was suspended round those who were thus to be drowned, in order to ensure their sinking, and as a mark of disgrace, as we may well suppose, it was hung round the neck of the criminal. Now "millstone" is farther proverbial for a very heavy stone (Rev. xviii. 21), and Christ makes this still stronger (perhaps of himself, perhaps the proverb already ran thus) by the very special form μύλος ὀνικός.[1] He will say then that such a fearful and ignominious corporeal punishment were *better* for a man—than what? In the first place, and most directly: better than that (or before that) *he should do this*, and thus become himself a stone of stumbling to his brother! And thus the words are literally repeated in Luke xvii. 2. But there, as also here, follows the further sense whenever we ask, *Why so? Better* than the wo (ver. 7) which he incurs by such conduct, than the eternal fire (vers. 8. 9)—better than this, any merely temporal punishment of death in the deepest *water*.[2] O thou tender love, how sharply dost thou speak against the offending of thy beloved little ones, and yet how is thy holy anger against those who are destitute of love, itself nothing but burning love, which would ward off sin and its condemnation!

For the rest, it is self-evident, which we would here further only indicate for reflection, that all that is said in vers. 3—6, is,

[1] For, which is a secondary thing, neither according to some is the *nether* millstone as bearer, nor, according to others, the *upper* as worker, compared to an ὄνος. That would be strange, does not admit of being proved, nor does the fact of its being precisely the upper or the nether serve to strengthen the saying. But it is the stone of a mill turned by an ass, mola asinaria, as we distinguish jumentarias molas from manuariis, *i.e.*, a mill driven by asses, not a hand-mill, in which case it denotes the largest and heaviest kind of stone.

[2] In the water all flesh drowns, but the fire judges the spirits. Thus might the flood, by the destruction of the flesh, save the spirits from the last judgment. (1 Pet. iii. 19; iv. 1, 6).

with great compression and profound penetration, put in so decided a form, because Christ everywhere comprehends in the first beginning the entire consequence and development. He who only begins with the "being converted and becoming" already enters into the kingdom of heaven, and must then, indeed, remain in it and go on. The *μείζων μέγας* is already attributed to the first self-abasement, because it is the first step on the right way; but in it the whole way and course is further included. It is the same with the receiving (ver. 5), the same with the offending (ver. 6), in which not every individual act of *offence* (for who is not guilty of this?) but the continuing in such a disposition, receives so terible a threatening.

Ver. 7. Wo to the *world!* This now expresses the open opposition of those who are without, and unhappily continue without, to all who are *in the kingdom*, as *μικροί* and *μεγάλοι*, to whom, in vers. 8, 9, the "*thy*" applies. Wo to the world *because of* the offences, more exactly *ἀπό*, *from* or *out of* the offences, which it gives and takes out of its own evil will; thus does it prepare for itself the wo which is not ordained for it. That offences come, that men in the world will offend one another and be offended—*ἀνάγκη ἐστίν*, Luke xvii. 1, *ἀνένδεκτόν ἐστι*, this is indeed, alas! inevitable, as the world and man is; this is not so quickly to be done away with, and that for a twofold reason. First, in respect of their origin, they are a necessary consequence of the natural corruption in which men cannot, indeed, be or do otherwise; so long as the world remains and chooses to remain the *world*, it cannot be otherwise in it. But secondly, also, in respect of their end or design, these offences, tolerated by the long-suffering and wisdom of God, are themselves a necessary means also to the coming of His kingdom, and are used for the trial and confirmation of believers, as those who continue in them must serve for its manifestation and its development for the judgment—meanwhile, also, for giving the salutary experience of sin to many who shall afterwards become believers. The fundamental idea is the same as at 1 Cor. xi. 19. God would indeed otherwise suspend the *freedom* of men, which He never does, and would hinder a free development in the recovery of the lost, in so far as such will let themselves be recovered from the world. He must then, instead of patiently bearing with men,

rather at once drown them all, which in the absolute sense would not really be *better* for the individual and the whole, as was affirmed in the proverb before only in a relative sense. There is then a necessity for these offences, yet not an absolute necessity anywhere; for the world can also *receive* the children of Christ in His name, Christ is sent to it Himself, and in His followers, for blessing and not for wo. Already, before pronouncing the wo, He has first exclaimed: *Blessed* is he whosoever shall *not* be offended in me![1] Therefore only *take* thou no offence in a world full of offences, and thus wilt thou be helped. And above all things, give none thyself as much as in thee lies, *i.e.*, no evil, culpable offence; for that the truth and love of Christ shall and must always itself be the greatest offence to the world, and that the wo arising from this rests only upon *its* head, we have already seen at chap. xv. 12—14. *Wo to the man* through whose own fault, contrary to the will of God, the offence *comes*, *i.e.*, is given or received! This second exclamation is not quite the same as the first, Wo to the *world!* but again (as in these sayings the word is ever capable of a two-sided application) makes the transition to those who no longer belong to the world, and yet are guilty of an offence. Wo to the *man*, without distinction and exception, who, as man, and following the bent of his natural corruption, acts in the same way as the evil world; for all that offends, whatsoever it be, is still the *world*, although within the kingdom of heaven, although in a disciple of Christ. Wo to the same man when, instead of a pure turning from such an offence, he continues and goes on in it; the wo of the offence shall remain upon his head notwithstanding of the Divine counsel, according to which offences are permitted and in so far ordained. This is expressed here precisely as it is afterwards at chap. xxvi. 24, and may even here have been intended to carry a secret hint and terror to the conscience of Judas. Wo to the man, even were he an apostle, he is yet himself an *offence* and a *devil* among the twelve. *Perhaps*, as was the case at other times, as at the anointing of Christ by the woman in Bethany,

[1] Rud. Matthäi says here quite correctly: The *wo* is the consequence not of the fact that offences *must* come, but that they *are* come, the consequence not of the necessity but the actuality of offences. The *second* clause confirms not the *wo*, but the *offences* of the first clause.

this Judas may even have been the originator, or at least the promoter, of the evil thoughts connected with this unhappy dispute among the disciples. This, however, is only conjecture and uncertain; with more certainty we now apply the word of Christ with most perfect justice to another: Wo to the φιλοπρωτεύων in the Church, the pseudo-Peter and haughty *servus servorum Dei*, who with false key shuts the kingdom of heaven, offends and corrupts the faithful, nay, builds up a world full of offences (which yet is held to be the true church) as the Babylon which is afterwards to be thrown down as a millstone is cast into the sea! (Rev. xviii. 21).

Ver. 8, 9. If Christ, who cites the word of God in the Old Testament Scripture, puts his own new word on a level of authority with it, seals this with, "Verily I say unto you," summons his contemporaries, and not these alone, to hear, whosoever among them has ears—who assures us that His words shall survive heaven and earth, and declares that the office of the future Comforter, who is to reprove the world and to lead believers into all truth, is to interpret His words, and to bring them to the understanding—if Christ, who, as the risen one, Himself brings to the remembrance of His disciples the words which he spake when He was yet with them, so that thereby they begin now to understand these words and the Scripture—if He had not also before this at times *cited and repeated His own words*, there would be wanting what is more appropriate to Him—the highest Prophet, over whom the Father Himself cites the prophecy "Him shall ye hear,"—than to the former prophets who already did the same. But He did this, and so we find it in the Scripture, in which His words are now by the Spirit embodied. And when He repeats the same sayings in a different connexion, He will thereby teach those who hear and who interpret them, not merely that we have not yet enough heard and understood them, but also that their deep-searching import has been expressed, and finds its application in more than one immediate connexion. Thus He cites here a word which He had already spoken in the Sermon on the Mount, (chap. v. 29, 30), where we have interpreted it. There, as here, to *offend* means to give occasion to sin, to tempt; there it was the adulterous lust of the flesh that was immediately spoken of, here it is every incentive to sin in

general that is meant, and is comprehended in the great sum-total of all the offences in the world that come from men, or rather the inner offence, which comes to every one from his own flesh, is disclosed as their original ground and root, which is to be cut away. Wouldst thou not give offence without, so that the wo may not fall upon thee? Guard then against the offence within, and that with all severity! Slay the old *man*, from which it comes, with the salutary death that issues in life. In the words "thy hand or foot," Christ now again turns from the world to *His disciples*, and addresses every one who either is such or would like to become such; for only in reference to them does he use the familiar and confidential "thou" since the Sermon on the Mount, others He addresses invariably by "you." (He could not say, for example, John viii. 24: If thou believest not, thou shalt die in thy sins). In addition to this, the fact that I am offended by my own members, by myself, here presupposes the internal conflict of the old man with the new; the world knows not and feels not this, he who feels it is already no longer of the world. And yet, on the other hand, the offending world is still in him, and to overcome it *there*, is not a thing that calls for soft measures. Observe here the great difference between being as a child in the natural and in the spiritual sense, the manful struggle implied in the constant turning so as to become as children! Children play in innocent delight with themselves, with their hands and feet, but a spiritual child, because he is always in the process of becoming (*i.e.*, of ceasing to be), cuts them off and plucks them out. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ, following the order according to which there is first the looking upon with desire, and then the lusting to commit the deed, puts the eye before the hand; now, looking still deeper into the matter, He inverts this order because the offence ever arises anew, and, even after the cutting off of hand *and foot* (which latter is here added by way of amplification), the eye yet comes after. It might, so to speak, be thought that the acting and walking being suppressed, the secret desire is now harmless; but if thou art not on thy guard against this, it will soon get hand and foot for itself again. The eye must not be spared, because the members are cut off! Here stands the emphatic word, *It is better for thee!* (καλόν σοι, another expression for συμφέρει

γάρ σοι, chap. 5) which corresponds to the συμφέρει before, ver. 6; comp. the closer connexion (Mark ix. 42, 43). On the at once sharply ironical and severely rebuking sense in which the *entering* into life as a cripple is to be understood, we have already spoken at the other place where it occurs; here the εἰσελθεῖν is quite parallel to the first εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν from which the discourse set out. We have already given our opinion also as to the further appliciation of this to the casting away of all that might be near and dear to us, as hand or eye, whenever it offends us; here it is again evident that this cannot be the most immediate, or the sole meaning, but, most properly, the internal offence in ourselves stands opposed to every offence of an outward kind. And yet it is not to be connected merely with incitements to sin against the law of love and truth, with anger, lust, and lies in the grösser sense, but the flesh which is to be slain must be detected and pursued, even in those spiritual forms which it assumes; the eye of criticism and asceticism must also be plucked out, and the hand of industrious zeal for public good, and the foot of all our own ways of virtue, must be cut off. Or, to speak with *Lange*, also the talents of penetration —progress—energy.

Finally, observe that here Christ says not merely εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός, instead of εἰς γέενναν (chap. v.) but now, *for the first time* εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον, into the eternal fire—which predicate is not connected with the word at chap. xiii. 42. Here it is already as at chap. xxv. 41, and it is a return to the ἄσβεστον of the Baptist (chap. iii. 12), which is therefore, in Mark ix. put in place of the expression here used, and to which are added the explanatory words concerning the unquenchable fire here omitted by Matthew, and concerning the salutary salt of the other fire, which is not yet the unquenchable, the eternal, fire in the proper sense; of which we shall speak when we come to the interpretation of Mark.

Ver 10. We know who *these little ones* are: not merely children, but also such as are childlike, in humility and weakness—believers on Him: although it is not again exclusively these latter, but, in a certain measure, actual children also to whom they are compared, and beside whom they are placed. The child set in the midst stands always there, although it is only by carrying out the fundamental view of the whole subject, that the

discourse can further apply to it. The offending proceeds from a *despising* and proud overlooking; therefore, in the words, "*Take heed,*" Christ most directly addresses the disciples who wished to be the greater. But the plural, which again occurs after the singular, includes the world along with the disciples, as both were comprehended together since ver. 7. What all-embracing transitions in the incomparable discourse of Christ! From one child which must preach humility to the apostles, He passes to the entire great world full of offences, and the wo proceeding therefrom! From the eternal fire of hell, to the angels in heaven before the face and throne of God! From the sharpest wo back to the tenderest love, which will have no human child to be despised! Before Christ fully expresses the ground-idea of this *second* part of his discourse, namely, that the greatness which is graciously ascribed to the little ones is founded on his redeeming grace, according to the Father's good pleasure, he first prepares the way for this, by representing the angels[1] as an intermediate rank between God and man, related to both. The whole doctrine of Scripture concerning angels represents them thus: they are indeed above us in respect of our present position; but yet in respect of our calling to the glory of Christ, and renewal after the image of God, they serve us. Already their name, *angels* or messengers, represents these heavenly spirits as united to the earth and us. So highly is man honoured before God, so highly honoured is every individual of these little ones! The world as such enjoys indeed, somewhat, the protection and service of the angels, but only remotely and indirectly; not in the personal appropriation which is here denoted by *their* angels. This *αὐτῶν*, standing together with *ἑνός*, has certainly a specializing force, and does not again merge into an absorbing generality, the prominence given to every individual; it points therefore, indeed, although only by way of allusion, to special guardian-angels of persons, in regard to which the unanimous doctrine of the Church Fathers[2] had no

[1] Out of which Lange, against all certainty of the letter, here frames the "life-images, light-images, "*genii*" of men! Only, at Acts xii. 15 "his angel," might, according to the popular belief, signify something *similar*, the "announcement" or "appearance" of Peter.

[2] See the citation of passages in J. F. V. Meyer's Blätter für höhere Wahrheit i. 183—in part after Fr. Schmidt's treatise in Illgen's

doubt, since Christ had said "I say unto you." Yet not so as that *every* man as such has his guardian-angel, and keeps him all his life long; this is a privilege of those little ones, *i.e.*, as well of the natural as the spiritual children, inasmuch as the former, before the outbreak of corruption, the latter after this, as being on the way to blessedness, are capable of such guidance, and (by their humility) are worthy of it. Every child has his angel until sin drives him out, as we may yet trace it in the reflection of the angelic appearance on the countenance and in the form of children; children as such belong as yet to the "children of God," until the offence from within and without causes them to be lost. Every believer again who may be saved through the grace of redemption gets as a new spiritual child, his angel again, and especially needs him in his weakness as a beginner now for protection and monitions of a deeper kind, than the weak, foolish children in bodily danger. We forget the angels far too much although Christ reminds us of them in the daily prayer (in the third petition), we speak in particular to our children far too little about their angels, and we ourselves as believers do not think enough of ours. This is at the same time a sinful despising of these exalted servants of the Most High, who yet so faithfully stoop down to us; it is also a despising of Him who sends them. The angels are in *heaven*, and yet occupied at the same time in service and business on earth about their wards, for the heaven is not closed in space over the earth, but is ever open to us in everything which it sends; where the angels of God go and stand, there also is heaven, and the face of God, which they *at all times*, διαπαντός, without interruption from any thing else, *behold*. I cannot at all find in this expression, as the most of commentators do, a special designation "of distinguished throne angels," (according to the analogy of those who stood nearest to the Oriental kings, Esth. i. 4, comp. elsewhere, Job xii. 15, which I do not despise as a apocryphal, for see Luke i. 19: if such an high angel were given to every little one, where then would remain the rest, and how could this be demonstrated?[1]

Deukschrift, with an interesting supplement from the *occulta philosophia* of Corn. Agrippa.

[1] The sainted v. Meyer also certified to me that he did not mean his note (which I cannot but so understand) to be understood of special angels of a higher class.

But it is a general designation of these *pure spirits*, who are not like men separated from God; it signifies that even those who always and everywhere behold the face of God, yet at the same-time, like the Father himself, look lovingly on the children and little ones. (Ps. cxiii. 5, 6.) So much only may lie in the expression which connects the high rank and glory of the servants precisely with the littleness of those who are served, namely that the less, and the more needful of help, the protegé is, so much the mightier is the protector who is given to him. Although again it is not this alone that can determine the selection and arrangement in these things, which a vail hides from our eyes, for then we might scarcely be mistaken if we supposed that Gabriel was the guardian angel of the child Jesus. We do not see all this, and yet Christ calls to us in an awakening voice, *See to it!* Let the eye of faith be thoroughly open for what I say unto you! Wherever there is a *child* of God (in every sense), there the heaven is opened and let down to it, there is Bethel. Enter in, offend not thyself and the child, but go in, and share in the grace. This grace, however, is that which comes from the Father through the one only Son of Man. Therefore he does not say here at first: the face of *their* Father (namely, the Father of the *little ones*, since for the angels, God is certainly not Father) but of *my* Father!

Ver. 11. *For*,—not because the children of men have deserved it, nor because the children, before the outbreak of corruption, did already carry it within them, and could enter into the kingdom of heaven by their own actual innocence. O no! They are all the lost, but I am come to save and to bless the lost. (Luke xix. 10). What an immeasurable word again so simply spoken! There stands the ladder of Jacob before our eyes: below are the *little ones*, then their *angels*, then the heavenly *Son of Man*, he who comes as the original angel from the presence and from the bosom of the Father,—and then above him (ver. 14) the *Father* Himself, and His good pleasure.

Vers. 12—14. We will not now enter particularly into this parable, but reserve it for Luke xv., where, with strengthened repetition, it opens up the grand profound connexion of a series of parables. Instead of ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ there, we have here ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη, which certainly at first sight appears to be the same, and

yet is not so. There ἔρημος מִדְבָּר is not so much the *desert* where they have gone astray, as the pasturage, the heath, where the ninety and nine graze, well cared for; here, however, Christ alludes to such passages as Jer. l. 6; Is. xxxiv. 6, 11, 12, here therefore, as appears also grammatically, the ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη is to be construed with πορευθείς, not with the foregoing ἀφείς. Oh how faithfully and earnestly does this love of the Shepherd *seek*, and yet it *finds* not every lost one; hence the *joy* even of the Son of God himself upon every discovery—"as if he had found a new heaven." Bengel rightly says on the ἐὰν γένηται εὑρεῖν, what is warranted by the expression: *Inventio peccatoris est coram oculis Dei quiddam quasi contingens; ergo gratia non est irresistibilis.* We do not shrink even from leaving out the *quasi*, which a feeling of reverence has dictated. For if the *finding* comes altogether and alone from the power of God, why then does it not take place at once, but only after a long previous *seeking* through the entire history of man and of the world? The faithfulness of the seeking love of Christ is, however, in such a parable, held up at the same time before his disciples as an admonition to follow his example; this lies in the question which stands before: *What think ye?* Ye proud ones, who are so ready to despise and offend the little ones? The ὕπαγε (ver. 15) is to be done in the sense of the πορευθείς (ver. 12), which comes into finer prominence when, as in our language, the same rendering can be given to both words: Go with the same faithfulness of love as thy Master *goes* after the lost one! Herein is given, at the same time, the connecting link between the *third* principal part which follows at ver. 15, and the second; the second concludes at ver. 14 with what it began, inasmuch as the *Father in heaven* wills not that *one of these little ones* be lost (ver. 10), therefore also that they be not offended by you. Although by the shepherd in the parable is certainly meant the Son (as appears more prominently in Luke xv.), yet it is worthy of notice that Christ here uses another οὕτως for explanation, and thus rises higher. Not: so am I, and do I—but: so is the love of *the Father*, of course in the Son. "Oh how very different is the great God from us little men! For we little men in our pride look on what is great, but the great God in His compassion looks on what is little, and is great in the little." (Hofacker). Now also when the children of God are

viewed in common, Christ says significantly *your Father* (as at ver. 10, *my* Father)—He will thereby at the same time say: Ye other children of God, who are therefore to resemble your Father in loving the little ones.[1] It is not the will or the good pleasure literally *before* the holy wisdom, before the graciously shining face of the Father (רָצוֹן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה) that one should be lost. This mode of expression as a whole (which Peter has well preserved 2 Pet. iii. 9), is taken from Is. xviii. 23, xxxiii. 11, and the *verily I say unto you* (ver. 13), already corresponded to the oath of Jehovah with Himself in that passage. Here a sermon is preached to us on the worth of every single human soul before God, here we are comforted against what the appearance of things in the world might otherwise suggest, namely, that the lost one is left to wander about unsought and forgotten. We are to believe that the Father forgets no one, but in this faith we are also diligently to exercise the love that seeks along with Him.

Ver 15—17. The full and clear understanding of this entire passage is only to be obtained from the connexion with the foregoing, as we have traced it above. Christ speaks here for the *future* of His church, quite as naturally and warrantably as (at chap. x.), he connected the prophetic glance into the future with the sending out of the disciples. His starting-point, indeed, was the immediate present, where the warning applies still to the disciples: otherwise, even ye are not at all in the kingdom of heaven! How they must become children in spirit, and only as such little ones, are to possess in humility, and to manifest in love, the true greatness which belongs to them in common with every other little one—of this He has already plainly spoken. How such love *receives*, how it does *not offend*, how it does not *despise* or neglect any one who, according to the will of the Father, is redeemed by the Son—all this has already been spoken of, in so far as it must follow from the designation and confirmation of the true greatness of the disciples. But it yet remains now specially to show how the love that proceeds from the seeking shepherd-love of God, and is implanted by the

[1] Which Alford has now expressed still more pointedly thus: When he assures of the dignity of the little ones it is "My Father,"—when he gives the motive for the conduct of Christians, on the other hand, it is "your Father."

heavenly Father in all His children in the new birth *would express itself in future*, when once the kingdom of heaven was founded upon earth and set in order; how the greatness and dignity of every individual in whom Christ is, and lives, and loves, in order to save him and through him others, shall then be joined together into compact *unity* as a *power* of his *church*, which it exercises so as to *prevent* the offence of sin (which will still have a place in the midst of it), as strongly as with loving forgiveness it *bears* such offence. Hitherto the idea has occupied the foreground that love, as it gives no offence itself outwardly, and, moreover, slays the offence within itself, first of all takes no offence from the weakness and sin of a brother, but loves him in the forgiving and reconciling love of the Father's will; now, however, the other side must follow,—seeing that yet all sin is and remains an offence,—namely, that this love, notwithstanding, cannot against the truth call evil good, cannot in particular softly spare the brother who lays claim to the name of Christ, but must *rebuke* him with all the severity of seeking love, until he is again found, and restored from the error of his ways. Hitherto it was: Sin not thou against thy brother and partner with thee in redemption! Now it is naturally the other case: But if *thy brother* sin against thee—how then art thou to prove the love as a holy power given to thee as a member of the great society consisting of all who believe in me? In this way everything perfectly harmonizes, and only thus can we rightly understand how Christ here further supplements what was already said (at chap. xvi.) respecting His Church, and lays down a fundamental principle for its guidance in regard to offences in the midst of it. Every true theory respecting church discipline finds here its twofold and yet single principle, as it were the formal and the material: to remove the offence in truth, to seek the lost one in love (also by rebuke.)

Brotherly rebuke is already, (Lev. xix. 17, 18), declared to be a duty of love, because we are to love our neighbour *as ourselves*. As I judge my own sin in myself in order to my sanctification before God, so also am I to judge that of others, in order that their guilt may not become mine through neglect of this service of love. (The complement and extension of what is said in the Sermon on the Mount, Matth. vii. 1—5.) Frank rebuke, *ἀληθεύειν ἐν ἀγάπῃ*, is opposed to the cherishing of hatred or con-

tempt in the heart, and also to that grosser species of falsehood in which one makes an evil report of his neighbour behind his back. Prov. xxvii. 5, 6; Sir. xix. 13—19: Speak, therefore, to thy neighbour, &c., Sir. xx. 2. Let brotherly rebuke first of all be real *rebuke*, let it be, therefore, honest and true: Thou hast sinned! But then and therein let it be also *brotherly*, speaking the truth in love, in order to recovery. Not: *Judge* him, nor even *chide* him—but ἔλεγξον αὐτόν, *convince, convict* him of his sin, help him to *repent*, beseech him to do so with all the power of the reconciling love of God which has already forgiven while it rebukes, and which would fain bring forgiveness to him. (Luke xvii. 3—4.) Strive to gain thy brother, to help him again into the right way (to restore him from his *fault*, Gal. vi. 1): then will be fulfilled either at once Ps. cxli. 5; Prov. xxv. 12, at least afterwards Prov. xxviii. 23, or—thou hast, on thy part, fulfilled thy duty and shalt not incur sin on his account. From this follows further, quite as naturally, that *brotherly* rebuke, mindful of human weakness, in order lovingly and sparingly to deal with one who in his pride will be easily provoked and offended, by no means goes all at once to him armed with the full public power, but begins quietly and gently before God, and only in the event of being unsuccessful, *rises by gradual steps* to ever increasing severity.

In denoting these steps for the future praxis of His Church, Christ can now naturally, as He is ever ready to do, connect what he says with the practice already enjoined[1] and in use in Israel, as in general afterwards, in the entire formation and constitution of the Apostolic Church, the Spirit transferred all the pure and available elements of the synagogue. If thy brother sin *against thee*: this certainly limits my duty and my right to rebuke him, in the first place, to those more immediate cases in which I might rather be tempted to be angry with him, and either privately or publicly to bring unloving complaints against him; still it would be very wrong to understand all that is here said only "of personal grievances and offences."[2] Rather, in the fur-

[1] Almost precisely as here stands the rule for ex. in Mischar happeninim Buxtorf. Florileg. hebr. p. 297.

[2] As the Lutheran Francke (Rudelb. Zeitschrift 1849-4), does, and now in order to refine away everything that goes against his Lutheranism, finds in the ἐκκλησία here only a "court of arbitration."

ther application, nay in the proper and deeper sense of this, it is by no means to be excluded that I, as a child and member of the Church, feel myself to be injured by *every* sin of a brother, and that in *love* to him I can and ought to receive and treat every sin of his, that becomes known to me, as committed *against me*. The genuine brother says then to his brother: Do not injure *me* by acting thus! What thou hast done hast grieved me! Go (ὕπαγε as at chap. v. 24), wait not till he comes, but go first in a friendly and zealous spirit to him. *Rebuke* him in the truth indeed, yet also in humility and love as an unselfish child of God, taking care that the beam is not in thine own eye when thou wilt take the splinter out of his; not so much thou, in thine own power, as in the name and authority of Him in whose sight ye are brethren, as a serving member of the society of all the brethren. Between thee and him *alone*,[1] without the presence of any others to disturb you, whose presence might only hinder the first impression of love by stirring up his pride; yet ye are not alone, for *I* am present when anything of this kind is being transacted between two in my name (ver. 20)—your secret meeting is already a church, thy rebuke is already the first exercise of the power which is given to it in all its members (ver. 18). If happily—and thou shouldst always hope for such a result with the "love that hopeth all things"—he shall hear thee, then hast thou *gained* thy brother, gained him for God (ver. 14: 1 Cor. ix. 19), for the church as a brother, for thyself as *thy* brother! But if not, do not all at once give him up because *thy* wisdom and love have accomplished nothing, do not rush to the conclusion: He hears not and will not hear, because he has not heard *me!* Take with thee one or two, of course not the first best, but such as are nearest as regards their knowledge of the case and love to you both; such as in a brotherly spirit can say with you: Thou hast sinned before us and against us—whom he can also honour as brethren, if he will honour any one. This already lies first of all in the expression *witnesses*: who can witness his sin against him in this interview which has now more formally constituted

[1] For with Fritzsche violently to connect μόνου with what follows, contrary to all usage of the New Testament, is not only superfluous, but disturbs the simple emphasis of the legislation as denoting the successive steps.

itself into a court for deciding a question of peace. At the same time, however, and if there should be no farther witnesses of his sin, they are at least witnesses of his conduct under the rebuke, and in the case of further disobedience, witnesses *against* him before the Church. This is more than the *alone* of the first step, but it is not yet the *publicity* which follows, and which needs no special witnesses; the advance to this further step is however already held up to him by way of warning: If thou hearest not us, then we tell it farther! Here Christ, in order to show that the order of his Church is founded on the justice of God, adduces the Mosaic rule of law, which was always to be observed (Num. xix. 15), of which He also (John viii. 17), makes the highest application to his own person, and here in the next place to his followers. He however counts, of course, the brother who had first entered on the office of brotherly judgment as one of the witnesses, and means therefore *one or two* in addition to him, that the matter may have *two or three* witnesses.

As it was before charitably taken for granted that he would *hear*, so now it is *more probable*, that if he refused to hear at the first stage, he will continue to do so at the second. Now, but not sooner, although now without sparing, which at this stage would be wrong: Tell it to the *Church!* What has the Church to do with a sin which thy brother has committed against thee? Certainly he has sinned also against the Church, a member of which he professes to be, he has *given an offence* which must be removed; the Church, so much as in it lies, may not tolerate and acknowledge in the midst of it impenitent sinners, who will not let the Spirit of God kindly rebuke them in order to their recovery. This her dignity as the Church of God does not permit; thus does Christ here plainly enunciate the principle of all church-discipline at present understood by so few, in so far as it must advance from admonition to *exclusion*. This latter is had recourse to, *in the first place*, not to make better, nor even (in another sense) to rebuke the person excluded, but chiefly to guard the unity and purity of the Church against the obstinate sinner.

Tell it to the *Church*—thus again does Christ speak quite definitely, and thereby certainly reverts to his first words in chap. xvi. 18: I will build my *Church*, so much the more certainly, as the whole dispute about rank among the twelve stands in such

connection with the word then addressed to Peter, that Christ now finds it necessary for their full information to explain himself on this point. We were heartily sorry to find such a man as Sack[1] saying: "The opinion that Christ here actually speaks of the future Christian Church, must certainly be rejected; he speaks of present and not of future relations, ἐκκλησία is equivalent to the synagogue then existing in every larger town with its judicial usages; the whole, therefore admits only of an indirect application to the Christian Church!" Of that which such a synagogue did, then, Christ could go on to say: *Ye* shall do it! Could Christ seriously have referred His disciples, the brethren in His name, to a court of those Pharisees whom yet, in the Sermon on the Mount, He himself had declared to be heathen and publicans, and say of it: Whoso heareth not these, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican? Already Pfenninger, in his very unbiassed philosophical lectures on the New Testament, says against this: "If Jesus says: He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad, and, He that heareth not your word, shake off the dust of your feet against him—so by the Church He certainly means not a church of Jews, of whom the greater number hate and deny Him, and the few love and believe on Him, but must speak these words of a church of His disciples. Of course! for others would receive no rules of conduct prescribed by Him for their churches." We say still further: At that time there was as yet no church of His disciples; *consequently*, he speaks of the future Church, of which He has said that He will build it.[2] It is hoped that the reader has so understood our whole interpretation of this discourse hitherto, from ver. 3, as

[1] Monatschrift für die evangelische Kirche der Rheinprovinz und Westphalens, March 1843. To this we have now to add, that unhappily even Delitzsch (von der Kirche, p. 9) still repeats such misinterpretation! On the other hand, Nitzsch (Prakt. Theol. i. 236) has acknowledged with assent my statement, that Christ can only have spoken here of his future Church, and besides has himself given some fine observations for the understanding of the entire chapter. Chiefly in support also of a former assertion of ours, he says, that the "rebuker is to bring the matter before the church, not as the injured private person, but as the first witness, and first receiver of the injury"—inasmuch as "in and along with that brother the Church was already injured."

[2] Thus also Löhe quite correctly, Aphorismen ueber die neutestamentl. Aemter. p. 3.

that it appears to him only natural and necessary when now, again, the *kingdom of heaven* in which the children of God are united as brethren, which was put in opposition to the *world* full of offences, at last appears as the future *Church*; it is hoped that we have already learned at chap. x., how Christ is wont in the continuation of His discourses to prophesy, and to make regulations for the future. We do not, however, need all this in order to show what is meant by the Church, but have at ver. 20 the most literally authentic definition from Christ himself in the closest connexion: The ἐκκλησία is, where are συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα; it will continue to exist upon earth, in its power so to act as I now prescribe to it, if *I am in the midst of it.* This surely is spoken of His spiritual presence *for the future.*

The Church is the society, called together in unity of faith and love, of those who believe on Him, who are united in His name; a society in which is carried out, and exercised *upon earth*, what is valid *in heaven* (before its exalted Lord and Head). This is the simple fundamental idea here clearly expressed. It is at the same time certified here with equal clearness, that it cannot be without sin and offence in the midst of it; for it happens that a brother sins, and must be admonished. It is rather precisely the institution of divine faith and love, the design of which, as it is to call the sinners of all the world to repentance, and to receive every one for the sake of Christ who only begins to humble himself, and to admit him into the ever open gates of the kingdom of heaven—so also to admonish those who already belong to it, and to carry this out in the exercise of long suffering and severity, until those who are entirely disobedient shall be again separated from it. It is, after and beside that first συναγωγή of the Jews, the true, really united ἐπισυναγωγή, in which one takes care of the other, in which the *exhorting one another* Heb. x. 24, 25, finds its living, progressive exemplification. That the injunction: Tell it to the Church! can in the first place mean only the Church in the place where thou art, the nearest united society of believers to which you belong, is clear—but the Church of every place represents again the entire Church, as is evident from ver. 20, and this also is the basis given in the apostolic constitution which represents in many ἐκκλησίαις the one ἐκκλησία. Only thus is the manifestation of the Church in

the world at any time possible. True, according to circumstances, in so far as this can be done in truth, the *Tell it to the Church!* is even in the case of sinning churches to be further applied by bringing it before the greater society; still every little individual society retains its right in the name of the whole, so long as it truly exercises it in *His name*, in the name of *Christ*.

The power of rebuke which the individual brother exercised in private, at the first stage, was not only his duty but his *right*, a right which emanates from the church to every member of it. But if now further the sinner is rebuked in vain *by many* (2 Cor. ii. 6), *before all* (1 Tim. v. 26), in the name of Christ—then let him be to *thee*—who broughtest his case before this court of jurisdiction, and art now discharged of thy brotherly obligation—because he must now also be to the whole church *as the heathen and the publican!* (The article has here the force of the plural, denoting the class by the individual example). The "*to thee*" is now said to every one. Heathen are those *without*, not belonging to the people of God; *publicans* those who, although within, are yet to be reckoned with the heathen; the typical expression taken from the relation and usage then existing, implies the corresponding truth in the future. He has in the first place forfeited his name as a brother, and his right as a brother to be exhorted, for it has become manifest that there is no principle of brotherly feeling in him upon which to take hold; no one in the Church owes any further duty to him as a brother. It is altogether self-evident that, on the further development of the relations involved in the Church, this implies the denial of Church privileges, exclusion from the sacrament, &c. Here there is no respect of persons, here there is no other sort of judgment appointed beyond that of the Church. As even Pope Sylvester II. himself (Epist. ad Seguin. in Maimburgh and Baronius) has said: "If the Pope of Rome were to sin against a brother, and after repeated admonition would not hear the Church, he should, according to the commandment of Christ, be held as a heathen and publican!" Here, however, we ask in sadness with Wesley, not merely in reference to the Church which must hear when Rome has spoken, but to every degenerate church of the present time in common: "But if so, in what land do the Christians live? Christ gives the answer: The gates of hell shall

not prevail against it! His Church is still there, if not in the many, yet in the few; their power is still shown, their right exercised, if not in visibly arranged forms, yet silently; and even were the key for binding and loosing to be withdrawn, and lodged in the secret prayer of two or three, it would still be present there, and efficacious for actual binding and loosing, as we shall soon see in what follows.

Ver. 18. That by this *binding* and *loosing* even here, where the keys are not again expressly mentioned, Christ understands, in the widest scope of the terms, *all expression of power and exercise of authority* on the part of His Church, which He will one day, (if the Church thus acts upon earth in His name), ratify also in heaven—this is not less clear than that the expression still refers most directly to what was said before, consequently to the denial of grace, the withholding of forgiveness, from the heathen and publicans who are shut out, as in the other case to the assurance of grace to penitents. That in this decisive word all precedence of any Peter whatsoever disappears, and that every exercise of any power upon earth, relating to the things of heaven, is represented as an emanation of that *power* which the Church possesses in its *unity*, every member of it (were he even an earthly head) only in virtue of his union with the body—this has already been repeatedly said, and yet cannot be enough considered. The Church possesses the word of *truth*, (and with it the Spirit of truth), which it rightly interprets in itself, and by consequence *validly* applies to those cases that occur, therefore is its binding and loosing, forbidding and permitting, denying and affirming by this word, true and valid, in the whole, and in particular cases. The Church is the body upon earth filled from the heavenly head with all the fulness of God, *i.e.*, with the holy *love* of the Father in the Son; therefore, if it has loved as God and with God, so as to seek the lost brother, it may and ought to *pass judgment* with God upon every one who will not let himself be found and restored. Let us now again connect together the beginning and conclusion of Christ's discourse upon this occasion, let us attentively consider to what a height it has risen from that word with which it began,—viz., Become as children, only thus can ye belong to the kingdom of heaven! This is the ruling conquering power which

the Father prepares for Himself in the little ones. Over the door of the Church it is written, He who comes not hither as a child, where only children alike great and alike little dwell together, let him stay without! But within, these children are sovereign in their sphere against, and over, all that would disturb the holy and blessed fellowship. Christ who builds this Church for Himself, and indeed alone governs it, from whose supreme prerogative alone all prerogative and all power that are valid in it must proceed—yet says not: I will keep the keys by me, I will myself on every occasion give the decision directly from the throne! But according to His manner of acting in all His works upon earth, in the kingdom of grace as of nature, He appoints an *intermediate agency*, in which He transfers the keys to His followers, and yet at the same time keeps them Himself. It is said: I in them, as thou in me! (John xvii. 23.) For whatever His followers do that is valid, is so only in His name, *i.e.* because He is in the midst of them, ver. 20. The case then is not at all possible, that they should bind upon earth what He looses in Heaven, or loose upon earth what He binds in heaven; whenever such a case occurs, then they are no longer the persons to whom the "Verily I say unto you" applies. The ὅσα ἐὰν is indeed an exceptionless πάντα, as the words here stand in conjunction with the certain promise expressed in the ἔσται δεδεμένα, λελυμένα—yet this is far from being true conversely, as if Christ might have said: Whatsoever I bind or loose in heaven will be bound or loosed by you upon earth. For, in particular, the discipline of the Church exercised in the way of receiving or excluding, the application of the Gospel upon earth in the way of forgiving or retaining sin, can never certainly be quite adequate to that which Christ Himself does from heaven; He retains to Himself *reservata*, to bind many things to which the eye of the earthly administrator does not reach, and in like manner He has again already loosed many things ere they are recognised or expressed upon earth. Consequently in those cases in which the sentence, valid in heaven, is executed upon earth, the ἔσται is rather recognised as an already existing ἐστί, and the Church only says: We *see* and *testify* that thou art bound in heaven, (Acts viii. 21, 23)—we see and testify that Christ hath again loosed thee. *Again* loosed? Certainly, for precisely on this

account does Christ put the binding first, and yet make a loosing to follow. The two are by no means contemporaneously parallel, nor is the first mentioned first only because in it the *power* of the Church is most strongly evinced when it *judges*. An irrevocable, irredeemable ban, is far from being spoken of here; in its highest exercise of power the Church *looses* again precisely that which it has bound; it has, however, only bound in order that it may be able again to loose when this is possible. The final exclusion of the incorrigible, in virtue of which they are accounted as heathen and publicans, as it is requisite on its own account, so at the sametime it is only the last and strongest expression of that love which seeks their recovery; for the heathen and publicans are certainly not excluded from the preaching of the Gospel, which is to be continued in all the world until the end,[1] and if in this instance brotherly love has come to an end, there yet remains general love, nay more than this the love that weeps and intercedes for the *lost brother*. All this might already be found in ver. 18, did it not come into still clearer prominence in what follows.

Ver. 19. In the πάλιν λέγω ὑμῖν Christ, who here prophesies in a very condensed style respecting the future development of the Church, expresses much by indication. The πάλιν is first of all not properly equivalent to "further," as if something now followed quite different from what goes before, but here also it is the same power that is spoken of as was spoken of there. It happens with the binding and loosing just as with the hearing of prayer; it is valid in heaven only because it is the witness of what was already valid in heaven, just as prayer is heard because by the impulse of the spirit in faith it has already come forth from the supreme counsel and will. All binding and loosing is accomplished *by* prayer, for the admonition is given in the love of praying faith, and the excluding rebuke is administered in the same love. The Church is only in prayer united, so as to exercise its power, and it, like every individual of its members, performs all its works of authority only as the Son of Man upon

[1] Therefore it was wrong not at once to admit the Poenitentes as ἀκροωμένους, but first to put them outside the door as προσκλαίοντας, χειμάζοντας; this went beyond the word of Christ, who would allow even every heathen and publican to hear.

earth performed his miracles, namely, as being heard of the Father. Therefore, *Basilius* is quite right when he, here also, specially notices the prayer for forgiveness of sin in behalf of others. It might, indeed, with a certain measure of truth be said in opposition to this: Not surely prayer for him who has just been excluded, for in him the love that seeks the sinner has already so far exhausted itself in rebuke and final judgment, as that he must be given up for lost; if all this has been done to him in vain, what can now help him? But viewed strictly, this is valid only *ad interim*, only with the *reservation* of the power of God which can yet again restore the lost one. (Rom. xi. 23). The last thing which the Church does in its binding, and neither can nor should *cease* to do, is the same thing which it remains for the individual to do for his enemies, namely, to intercede for him (chap. v. 44). Or, is the Church which prays for all men (1 Tim. ii. 1), to shut out their lost brethren alone from this benefit? Oh! if this were a settled principle in church discipline, that the lost brother should yet be prayed for, what a power would *such* binding much oftener evince towards loosing again! Although, of course, the general term γενήσεται is assigned as a *promise* to be an inducement to every believing prayer, it yet nowhere promises an unconditional fulfilment, least of all where it concerns the faith or unbelief of another, which lies as little in our power as in the power of God. It is as we have said on chap. xvii. 20. Finally, the Berlenb. Bible (whose grains of gold amid the rubbish let no one despise) is right here also, when it says on vers. 19, 20: "If now, however, things should come to such a strait, that the Church could not exercise this prerogative (of an officially acknowledged binding and loosing), Christ gives the farther assurance, that if only two or three unite together in spirit and in truth in the prayer of faith, these may yet act with effect in the matter, although the world does not acknowledge it. This points to a more straitened state of the Church, and says that we are not to withdraw the hand on this account." Very right and true indeed, for Christ had certainly such thoughts in his mind when, instead of the wide and comprehensive "you" of the entire Church, he says *two or three*, and at the same time, as the ground of this, substitutes for the testimony without, the private prayer before God. He has here in

prospect that state of the Church in which the powerful exercise of the key of office by those who are called "the Church" before the world must be suspended, and when, in place of this, there comes the handful who are united in true fellowship, praying in secret. In such a prospect he could not and would not say: Where thousands are united—but where two or three are united! It may be questioned whether what is written in Acts iv. 32 has ever been fully realised since the Apostolic Church, and whether a larger assembly of the Church has ever been able to determine so perfectly as the first: *It seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord*, and *therefore* also: *It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.* When it is remembered that unity in prayer, the innermost unity of believers before God, and the uniting, the agreeing together (*συμφωνεῖν*), even of two suppliants, for some definite object of prayer, is a thing so difficult and rare even in the case of a believing husband and wife (*ex. gr.* for the preservation of a dying child), we will at once understand how significant, in all points of view, is the word which Christ has here spoken. He means truly no *agreeing* of the lips but of the *heart*, and the Holy Spirit in the heart. Where two together can truly pray for any definite thing in innermost unity, as children before God, this is from God, and is valid before God.

Ver. 20. According to Jewish statute a *synagogue*, to which the Shechinah of the Divine presence and hearing descends, must consist at least of *ten*; a smaller number. God despises and reproaches: Wherefore do I come when there is no one there? Yet, on the other hand, we find in Pirke Aboth. chap. iii. § 8, the saying: "Wherever two are sitting conversing on the law, there the Shechinah is with them." Here Christ names the smallest society that is possible, *two* or three (as at ver. 16 united witnesses before the throne of God), and ascribes to them the right and power of a Church in virtue of his presence with them. "He who can say, Thou and I, can speak of a Church, and can lay claim to the common grace." (Zinzendorf.) *Συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα* signifies something more than, and different from, *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου*, because it closely belongs to *συνηγμένοι*, and this again signifies: they *are* assembled, have not merely assembled themselves, are not first comprehended in the *συναγεσθαι*. *Where I am in the midst of them* (comp. 1 Cor. v. 4),

as the Mediator through whom their prayer is heard, as the Giver of that which they ask, as the confirmer of that which comes forth from them as a testimony either publicly or privately. Christ certainly speaks here already in the same sense as at John xiv. 13—14, and we have here already a prospective glance into the period of his heavenly omnipresence, which at Matth. xxviii. 20, he promised, when about to ascend to the Father. "This must signify a spiritual presence, or nothing, but it is a stupendous expression." (Pfenninger.) Yes, the as yet future spiritualization of his presence when he would be gone to the Father, He then in heaven and his Church on the earth, and yet at the sametime, He in the power of the Spirit *everywhere*, wherever his disciples are and unite together upon earth,—this and nothing else is what clearly lies in these words. We ask, therefore, again: Has he not here spoken with reference to the future Church? Therefore of course it is only: What ye *shall* bind, for he could not possibly speak of the present, and the final ἐκεῖ εἰμι is only a *prophetic* Present connected with the foregoing Futures. His presence depends not on the greater or smaller *number* of those assembled, and as little on any locality or *place* (which, in Old Testament fashion, he had again chosen to put his name there); but wherever He is in the midst of his believing and praying people, there is the Church to which he has given this power. Could there be a severer judgment pronounced against all pseudo-Catholicism than is given in this word, and again a more friendly consolation, a stronger call to make use of this power, addressed to the weak protestantism which seeks the "invisible church" elsewhere than upon earth, in the assembly of the faithful, "in all their and our places," which never remains invisible, from which the testimony of the ἐκεῖ εἰμι goes forth ever anew to the world?

THE WICKED SERVANT.

(Matth. xviii. 22—35. [Luke xvii. 3, 4.])

Peter has rightly understood verse 17 to the effect, that the exercise of brotherly rebuke, and the gaining of a brother, pre-

supposes the mild spirit of forgiving love, and only by this is possible. His thoughts being arrested by this, and flesh and blood again objecting to it, he has perhaps not listened with perfect attention to what follows, namely, the transference of the keys from Him to the Church. Or it may be he has apprehended this, so that in his confusion he does not venture to ask: Lord, but how does it then stand with the keys given to *me?* He rather now withdraws himself into the simple place of a brother in the Church, against whom a brother sins. We are inclined to prefer this explanation, and in so far to reckon it to the apostle's praise that he puts *this* question at *this time;* still there remains in it, on the other hand, the carnally proud reluctance to go on granting forgiveness to a brother without count or measure. Only the same reluctance indeed, as in all of us, for who would not oftentimes have in heart asked the same question as Peter here does? That Peter lays the matter so frankly before Christ, shows an honesty which is the second thing to be commended in his question, and which always imparts a certain measure of goodness to his ill sayings.

Ver. 22. As Christ has repeatedly made use of numbers one or two, two or three, Peter, on his part, will do so also, quite in the manner of Jewish ethics, which measured everything by numbers. Not merely ἁμαρτήσει καὶ ἀφήσω as a Hebraism for ἁμαρτήσαντι ἀφήσω (so Winer thinks), but in reality: How often may my brother sin against me, with the right and claim to receive forgiveness from me? This might indeed become very frequent and very bad, it must surely then have its limits! *Seven times* then appear to him all that can possibly be required for a wide ἕως[1]—but the matter stands quite otherwise: For if I can still count, then have I not yet forgotten what went before, and therefore not at all really forgiven from the heart. The answer of Christ indicates this with a quite perceptible irony, when it puts number against number. The first seven times is outbid by multiplication (in nowise by addition: 70 and 7 times), and the meaning of the ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτά can only be: *Septies*

[1] In the Talmud it is determined, that a man may be forgiven his sin till the third time, but not till the fourth time, according to Amos i. 3, ii. 6; Job xxxiii. 29, 30.

non solum, sed id ipsum septuagies. The formula with the ἑπτά instead of ἑπτάκις exactly corresponds to the word of Lamech, Gen. iv. 24, LXX., where the Heb. שִׁבְעִים וְשִׁבְעָה is certainly to be taken as a multiplication;[1] grant that it may have been proverbial, still it cannot be supposed that Christ, whose thoughts ever move in the sphere of Scripture, had not here that passage in His thoughts. Thus does the loving forgiveness here come into sharp and significant opposition to the revenge there expressed. But for what space of time is the reckoning to be understood? Seven times *a-day* was also a Bible proverb (Prov. xxiv. 16; Ps. cxix. 165)—hence, in the parallel passage (Luke xvii. 4), the relation of which to the present will there be investigated, this is expressly said: If Peter, as is probable, meant his seven times as applying to the whole life, then, in opposition to this absurdly small measure, Christ with all the greater right puts a proverbially large number, which is properly intended to be no number. He certainly does not say what would be monstrous and inconceivable: seventy times seven in a day—still less will He advise that a register be kept extending over years until the 490 be completed. But He means by this saying, which is quite as definite as it is indefinite: Let there be no numbering at all![2] Such a deliverance of course finds its proportionate application to the loosing again of one who has been bound before the Church, whose forgiving love remains ever open for the excluded one; although an inconsiderately hasty restoration, without a sufficient guarantee for the reality of the *Μετανοῶ* (Luke xvii.), cannot thereby be enjoined.

And now the foregoing profoundly compressed saying is ex-

[1] For partly, the placing the small number after is not agreeable to the most ancient mode of speech, partly there is least of all reason here for making an exception on account of emphasis (as elsewhere occurs once or twice in Genesis)—how flat would be this: also seventy times *and yet* seven times in addition thereto! Rather: Septuagies idque septuplum, many times seventy, as already ancient Rabbinical interpretation speaks of שִׁבְעִיּוֹת הַרְבֵּה. ...

[2] So also Lange, although he comes to it certainly by a different way, when he takes the seventieth number as the expression of "the endless Sabbath-rest in God, the absolute divine composure, in which alone it is possible always to forgive." How *that* could lie in the words, we do not comprehend.

panded into a parable, in which the idea is presented in a striking and popular form. It has quite the appearance of being only a parable, the particulars being represented in the manner of the parable; yet the profound ideas to which it relates are embodied in it in rich fulness, and it is significant even in the minutest details. Preach anew upon it every year and you will not exhaust it, you will ever find something new to draw from it. We will make it our endeavour here, where the superficial school-exegesis makes much shorter work than the exposition for the preacher, at least briefly to indicate all the principal points.

Ver. 23—25. *Ἀνθρώπῳ βασιλεῖ*, again not a mere unmeaning variation for *βασιλεῖ τινι*, but, as has been observed at chap. xiii. 24, 31, and is applicable to all the parables (see immediately again chap. xx. 1): coelestium similitudines *ex humanis!* If even in the kingdoms of the world, where the right of punishment must upon the whole be maintained firmly and strictly, a king yet exercises the royal right of forgiveness and release, so is it to be in the *kingdom of heaven* upon earth, in the Church, only according to the holy right of divine compassion. The king is God the Lord in His kingdom, the *δοῦλοι* are of course not slaves (as is evident from the selling afterwards), they are not even in the first place common subjects, but servants of the crown, and ministers; their reckoning shows in its immense sums, so to speak, "royal debts."[1] The most immediate application points, therefore, to the apostles and great ones in the Church, who, the more that has been intrusted to them, are capable of making all the greater failure; this, however, does not exclude the farther application to the reckoning before God of every man, according to his high calling. To be able to contract great debts is itself even an honour and dignity. If we understand talents of gold or silver, *ten thousand* are so much, that even Haman, in the book of Esther (chap. iii. 9), rated at this amount the riches of all the Jews in the land, speaking of it as a large sum. The number corresponds indeed, as a proverbially large amount, to the seventy times seven[2]—still because a *reckoning* is spoken of, Christ will at

[1] We may certainly also, with Sepp, be reminded here of the colossal lease-systems of that time—only we are not to find precisely the leaseholder Zenodorus of Lebanon expressly denoted here!

[2] Others are so bold as to find an allusion to the *ten* commandments (every one of which has been thousandfoldly transgressed).

the same time say that God actually *counts* our sins—and *weighs* them. There is a sermon by G. K. Rieger (in his Herzens postille), which, with equal profoundness and ingenuity, enters into this point, and with an inexorable particularity notes and sums up our register of sins through all their titles. Truly the number is for us incalculable, and the heavy weight of *every sin* that is to be counted already a talent! For of so-called small or light sins there are none. God will *reckon* with his servants, and he cannot but do so, although he makes the reckoning only to give the acquittance, he brings the sin to knowledge only to forgive it. (Is. i. 18). Without reckoning there is no discharge, there is here no forgiveness and acquittance in the lump, without previous inspection. The debt stands registered in the conscience, the revealed law brings the contra-book to our unfaithful book-keeping, then it becomes manifest that our cancelling could yet not cancel, but that we ourselves have written:—The two books agree with fearful exactness! God reckons with us because it is his *will* to do so, no avoiding or not willing on our part is in that case of any avail; He wakens the conscience, denounces the curse of the law, begins with visitation and rebuke—all which are *included* in this reckoning, which is certainly at the same time to be distinguished from the final reckoning that awaits us, spoken of in other parables (as chap. xxv. 19).—When he *began* to reckon, there came one before him, the first with ten thousand talents,—the others owe certainly not less, perhaps more. He was brought before the king, προσηνέχθε, for he came not of himself, had never yet considered the reckoning, but had indifferently and wilfully accumulated debt without limit. (Ps. l. 21). He is apprehended also before, and without, his having been able to see and compare the account of his fellow-servants, for this belongs not to the business between him and his Lord. The balance is absolute bankruptcy: he has nothing to pay! There is not even any counter-reckoning in part payment. Where, however, there is nothing, the king has not lost his *right*, as the half-false proverb runs, at least to punish the wilful bankrupt. The Divine right, in its strict demands, is here represented in a human parable: when the king, according to Jewish law (Lev. xxv. 39, 47; Ex. xxii. 3; 2 Kings iv. 1; Amos ii. 6, viii. 6) here commands the debtor, with his wife and children, and all that he has,

to be sold, so that he may at least receive something, this representation belongs certainly to the not entirely corresponding figure, still every one with whom the Lord begins to reckon, will feel what it means, without the critics having first to inquire.

Vers. 26, 27. The servant who, according to ver. 25, must already have confessed that he had not to pay, does not resolve to beg for forgiveness, but like all bad debtors who are ever speaking of future payment, he proceeds, not without continued presumption, to ask for delay and patience in his difficulty, although with all patience, nothing remains to be obtained. This is meant in the same sense as (in Luke xv. 19), the word of the prodigal son, who still thinks of working off what he owes to his Father. "This is the torment of all consciences when sin comes and gnaws them, they run hither and thither, seek help here and there, and presume still to do a great deal in order to pay God. A heart that is smitten by the law is humbled indeed, therefore it falls down before the Lord and asks grace; *but it has still the fault that it will help itself: this cannot be cast out of nature.*" (Luther). The common expression *I will pay thee all* (ver. 29) holds good among men—but can it have place between the Most High and us, who are so totally in his debt, and who can only pay every former debt out of his new gift and grace? Thus the Lord *pities* not only our poverty, but, in addition to this, our foolish anxiety, in which we promise what is impossible, and there is imparted to us unasked, nay, as it were, against our will, full and entire grace. The previous debt is remitted in opposito our ἀποδώσω, this *remitting of the debt*, however, is still to be distinguished (as Luther has rightly indicated by the addition of the word *also*) from the complete *loosing* out of the prison which we had properly again deserved by our wrong-asking. Go, thou poor man, and know that thou hast a gracious king!

Vers. 28—30. That was a counter-question for Peter: How often and how much must God forgive thee, *has* he forgiven thee? From which, then, the willingness to forgive His brother must follow as an inference. But how little does the wicked, harsh man learn *this* self-evident inference! In the ἐξελθών, emphatically placed before, the parable turns to its centrepoint: So let us go forth from the presence of God to walk and to act with our neighbour, from the judgment and mercy seat of the

royal Father and paternal King, before whom we stood, to our fellow-servants and brethren. But this wicked servant, whom Christ holds up here as a warning example, has learned nothing, has not at all in heart understood or received grace, but carries it away as a robbery. He goes out as soon as he can, light and joyful that he is only free again to go on as before. "He who seeks only forgiveness from God, and not also a new nature, will soon again lose the forgiveness also by new guilt, which he contracts with the old nature."[1] He *finds*,—as we all find at every step, if only we seek,—one of his *fellow-servants*; it may be one who was inferior to himself, as regards the high place he filled in relation to the King, in which he could contract debts so large; still minister and day-labourer are both servants of the King, the former also only a fellow-servant, and the latter properly a servant and subject of the King, whom no one can seize wrongfully against the law of the kingdom, without offending the King. The debt may, in this case, have been small in comparison with the great debt of the other, for the thoughtless spendthrift out of the king's treasury would have the will and power to squander much, and would borrow but little from others; now for the first time, when, by being called to account himself, the idea of remission or payment has come into his consciousness, he thinks of his own *Activa* (as we would know nothing at all of "sinning against us," did not God first speak to our conscience of sin)—in order thereby to gather as much as possible for the delayed payment. Which extreme perversity might then be understood to represent the disposition of the Pharisees who, by severe and harsh judgment, with respect to their neighbour, seek to make themselves righteous before God. This, however, seems to us to lie rather far back, amid the inexhaustible applications of which this parable is capable; what is most directly meant is *perversity* in general, delineated in the manner of the parable, the perversity that leads us not to have compassion on others when God has had compassion on us (ver 33). The βασι-

[1] So much is true, although, on the part of God, the actual forgiveness of sins at all times affords the beginning of a change of heart. Doubtful, at least liable to be misunderstood, is the still sharper statement of Alford: We may observe, that forgiveness of sins does not imply a change of heart or principle in the sinner.

λεύς or Tetrarch appealed on his own behalf to the law of Israel—the servant applies against the common man, his fellow-servant, the still severer Roman law.[1] The κρατεῖν and πνίγειν were, in so far, not properly "unlawful acts of violence," but a practice quite warranted by law, according to which the creditor was allowed even to seize the debtor by the throat, and thus to lead him into custody.[2] The reading ὅ, τι for εἴ τι ὀφείλεις is certainly only a correction, and the latter is probably no "courtly style of expression," but rather expresses the severity which appeals to the fact with an unavoidable *Ergo*: *If* thou owest me anything, now must thou pay, I seize thee, and will not let thee go till thou payest![3] This would hold good before the tribunal of any earthly kingdom, and must also hold good in the outward sphere of the law, but the law of love in the kingdom of heaven absolutely forbids one, who is himself a pardoned sinner from exercising every legal right against a fellow-sinner.—The scene of humble suppliancy here repeats itself in the same words; here, however, it is in its proper place, for one servant *may* pay to another, in so far as, and what, he owes to him. Christ, in order to bring out the contrast in the parable in the most striking form, selects as the example a truly humble debtor who acknowledges his debts (an ἀδελφὸς μετανοῶν, or at least λέγων μετανοῶ with which we ought to be satisfied); not, as it generally happens, a bad fellow-servant, who produces his counter-reckoning: Thou owest me as much, or more, even, than I owe *thee!* so that an endless quarrel begins between the sinners as to which of the two is in the other's debt. In opposition to this humble servant, He puts the wicked servant, whose proud, heartless zeal for law is only provoked the more, as very often happens, by the entreaty and confession of the other, instead of letting himself be *reminded* with shame of his own entreaty before,

[1] Which mixture of things, according to Hug's remark, perfectly corresponds to that period.

[2] According to the law *in obaeratos* the debtor was adjudged to the creditor: addicebatur—so that the latter in nervum ducebat.

[3] Not (according to Lange) any uncertainty about the proper reckoning: that which thou owest me *whatever* it be. On the other hand, Alford finely observes, that he is ashamed to name a small sum, and therefore expresses his claim in a general form: Be it much or little, this something, enough thou owest me and must pay!

which was quite the same. He would not, he threw him into prison—this is, in the first stage, the end of the sad story, but not the last end, for there is yet another Judge above him who judges on earth.

Vers. 31—34. Yes, there are also good-hearted servants there, who understand better what pleases the King in his subjects, who, with warm compassion, take the part of him who has been thus harshly treated, and cannot forbear telling the whole story which has grieved them, to their Lord, with whom they stand in the confidential relation of a like disposition. These are the pious ones, who send up sighs to the God of love over all the want of love which they see around them, and Christ will teach us by this feature in the parable, that certainly not merely through the omniscience of God, but in this instrumental way, our new debt which we incur when we do not forgive our debtors, must come before God to our deeper shame. Thus must the unmerciful one be put to shame, not only before the All-merciful, but even before his merciful fellow-servants, and in this already lies his convictive sentence: Wherefore *didst thou* also not act thus?—Sinful man is *sad* (Ps. cxix. 136)—the subject is grieved and complains of it to the Lord; but God Himself the King, in His majesty, is *angry*. It is a pity that Luther's rendering "mischievous servant," (Schalksknecht,) cannot be altered, it certainly does not express properly what is here denoted by the δοῦλε πονηρέ (in Munster very well עֶבֶד רָע). Only now is πονηρός to be understood in the most proper sense of the word; not before, with all the wilful contracting of debt in blindness, but now, when he to whom the same thing has been done, exercises no compassion. For "this is the climax of our depravity, that we are beggars with God, and yet tyrants with our brethren." (Helferich). Now first, after the foregoing σπλαγχνίζεσθαι, comes the proper ὀργίζεσθαι, which is not to be overlooked by those softhearted ones who conclude too much from the first exercise of compassion on the part of God, as if He cannot and will not at all be angry. Here again, before the anger breaks out, the king judging the unmerciful servant out of a heart full of compassion, condescendingly demonstrates why he has deserved the πονηρέ. This, however, is also the πρᾶσις ἀντίλεως Jam. ii. 13. *I forgave thee all that debt* (the entire

great reckoning, still lies there, not yet irrevocably blotted out and cast away, and is now held up before him anew!)—that was my royal act done in perfect earnest. Wherefore and for what? What hast thou given or offered to me for it? Nothing but an entreaty, and that not even a right one, for forgiveness, but, only for patience, till thou shouldst pay only with still more wickedness and new debt, seeing that thou hadst nothing. But I have reckoned thine anxiety to thee for honesty, and have made thy wrong entreaty itself the legal ground of my compassion, ἐπεὶ παρεκάλεσάς με—*as soon as* and *because* thou didst entreat me! Now, that thou shouldst exercise a like compassion, was self-evident: Was it not? This smites the conscience, in ourselves moreover, to whom this *condition* of grace is expressly laid down, as in this parable, so in all the Word of God, and who have it put into our mouths in our daily prayer to the Father. Here we see then that God's forgiveness is not and cannot be ἀμεταμέλητος, that the remitted account of former sins (2 Pet. i. 9) still hangs over all who turn grace into presumption, and must again become perfectly valid against them. (Ez. xviii. 24, xxxiii. 13.) Here we have a decision upon the theological question, utrum peccata semel dimissa redeant. Therefore now strict law returns in the King's sentence: till he should pay what was due! Of this *paying* as impossible, and this *till* as uncertain we have already spoken at Matth. v. 26 (of which we are here reminded.) Is it till the debt be worked off? It is, however, a prison that is spoken of, and not a house of correction; it will certainly be the πῦρ αἰώνιον ver. 8. (Mark ix. 43, 44.) Or until he learns again to entreat? This he would probably do immediately again, but it would now be still less right in the king than it was the time before. Formerly the king acted as a creditor towards the debtor, now in addition to this he is a judge against the πονηρός, and the βασανισταί (which can only be the mere official name for δεσμοφύλακες), must so execute the aggravated sentence, that any softening of the heart that was not softened by love, is as little to be hoped for by this tormenting, as that the poor debtor under the rack can gather either a first or a last farthing.

[1] Already Chrysost. here: Τουτέστι, ἀμετανόητον οὖσαν μηδὲ ἀποδώσειν ποτε

Ver. 35. This is also from the Sermon on the Mount, chap. vi. 14, 15. But in the more emphatic repetition here it is no longer *your* Father as it is there—but, *my* heavenly Father,[1] in whose name and commission I, by way of warning, announce to you this principle, according to which if you judge yourselves the matter rests there! My *Father*, who remains not the less King, Lord, and Judge. *Οὕτως*, precisely so as the parable represents it, and not otherwise, will he do certainly to you also my disciples and apostles—*if* ye (of course not in a single instance, but perseveringly and permanently as the definitive result), forgive not your brethren. *Τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν* cannot possibly be a spurious addition, but belongs essentially to the conclusion of the parable, as explanation of the *δάνεια* and *ὀφειλόμενα*—as, in like manner, the important expression, "from the heart," belongs also essentially to the matter. In this word, finally, all judgment is referred to Him who alone knows the heart, before whom *every one* who forgives not from the heart is already bound in heaven and shut out, although the Church on earth may not know it.

[1] Ἐπουράνιος (other reading *οὐράνιος*) occurs with *πατήρ* only here in the Gospels, nay in the whole New Testament, and in general, only here in Matth. in the first three Gospels.

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Government of Maharashtra
on 28 March, 2016